
00036675

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

00036675

Digitized with financial assistance from



HT Parekh
FOUNDATION

An Initiative by
HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 27 November, 2018

THE
NATIONS'
HISTORIES

POLAND



Thaddeus Kosciuszko.

THE NATIONS' HISTORIES

POLAND

BY

G. E. SLOCOMBE

36675
ac

LONDON: T. C. & E. C. JACK, LIMITED
NEW YORK: FREDERICK A. STOKES CO.
1916

Printed in Great Britain
by Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

SLAV ORIGINS AND INSTITUTIONS 1

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNINGS OF POLAND—MIESZKO AND BOLESLAW . . 8

CHAPTER III

MIESZKO II. AND CASIMIR THE RESTORER 22

CHAPTER IV

THE LAST OF THE EARLY KINGS 26

CHAPTER V

POLAND AT THE DEATH OF BOLESLAW III. 33

CHAPTER VI

THE DOWNFALL OF THE MONARCHICAL POWER . . . 40

CHAPTER VII

CASIMIR THE GREAT AND THE UNION WITH LITHUANIA . . 52

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST JAGIELLO 70

CHAPTER IX

PAGE

THE DESCENDANTS OF JAGIELLO 80

CHAPTER X

THE RISE OF THE NOBILITY 90

CHAPTER XI

THE LAST OF THE JAGIELLOS 97

CHAPTER XII

THE CONSTITUTION OF POLAND 110

CHAPTER XIII

STEPHEN BATORY 119

CHAPTER XIV

THE WASA KINGS 129

CHAPTER XV

JOHN SOBIESKI AND THE DELIVERANCE OF VIENNA . . 141

CHAPTER XVI

POLAND AND HER NEIGHBOURS 157

CHAPTER XVII

THE SAXON KINGS 166

CHAPTER XVIII

POLAND IN THE AUGUSTAN ERA 178

CHAPTER XIX

THE FIRST PARTITION 189

CHAPTER XX

PAGE

THE ACT OF REFORM 200

CHAPTER XXI

THE SECOND PARTITION 209

CHAPTER XXII

THE THIRD PARTITION 219

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GRAND DUCHY OF WARSAW 231

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CZAR AS KING 243

CHAPTER XXV

TRIPARTITE POLAND 257

CHAPTER XXVI

POLISH LITERATURE 270

CHAPTER XXVII

POLAND AND THE WAR 289

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF POLAND . . 298

APPENDIX 299

BIBLIOGRAPHY 309

INDEX 311

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO	*Frontispiece*
WARSAW: THE MONUMENT TO THE POET MICKIEWICZ	16
THE ROYAL PALACE AT POSEN	16
MONUMENT TO STEPHEN BATORY IN CRACOW CATHEDRAL	32
STREET SCENE IN CRACOW	32
CASIMIR III. "THE GREAT," KING OF POLAND	64
COURTYARD OF THE OLD UNIVERSITY BUILDING, CRACOW	72
MONUMENT TO KING WLADISLAW JAGIELLO IN CRACOW	72
MONUMENT TO SIGISMUND AUGUSTUS IN CRACOW CATHEDRAL	104
STEPHEN BATORY	120
HENRY OF VALOIS, KING OF POLAND, AFTERWARDS HENRY III. OF FRANCE	128
WLADISLAW IV., KING OF POLAND	136
A POLISH SOLDIER—PROBABLY JOHN SOBIESKI, KING OF POLAND	152
WARSAW AND THE VISTULA	180
WARSAW: KING SIGISMUND'S SQUARE	180
STANISLAUS AUGUSTUS, THE LAST KING OF POLAND	192
THE MARKET-PLACE, WARSAW	224
PRINCE JOSEPH PONIATOWSKI	236
WAWEL CATHEDRAL (SOUTH SIDE), CRACOW	264

PAGE

WAWEL CATHEDRAL (NORTH SIDE), CRACOW 264

FREDERIC CHOPIN 280

LIST OF MAPS

POLAND UNDER BOLESLAW I., 992–1025 18–9

POLAND AND LITHUANIA AT THEIR UNION IN 1386 . . 66–7

POLAND IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY 154–5

POLAND: FIRST PARTITION, 1772 187

POLAND: PARTITIONS IN 1793 AND 1795 207

DUCHY OF WARSAW 239

MODERN POLAND, SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF RACES . . 248–9

POLAND

CHAPTER I

SLAV ORIGINS AND INSTITUTIONS

FOR many centuries the Slavs were thought to have come from Mesopotamia: either through the Balkan Peninsula, or across the Caucasus and round the Black Sea and so into Europe; and not until early in the nineteenth century, when this theory was shattered by the works of Dobrowski and Szafarzyk, the greatest of Slav historians, were any more accurate ideas entertained concerning the origin of this race. Modern scientific research, along archeological and linguistic lines, has now fairly conclusively located the source of the Slavs somewhere north of the Carpathians. In dispute of the earlier theory may be mentioned the fact that there is no historical evidence of the presence of Slavs in the Balkan Peninsula before the fourth century A.D. On the other hand, Pliny, Tacitus, and Ptolemy unmistakably mention Slavs as being established north of the Carpathians as early as the first and second centuries A.D.

The first historic idea of the origin of the Slavs was introduced in the seventh century A.D. by the anonymous Chronicler of Ravenna, in the following words: *Sexta ut hora noctis Scytharum est patria unde Sclavinorum exorta est prosapia* (I. 12). Similar references occur in the works of the anony-

mous Chronicler of Bavaria, in the ninth century. The conclusion of the early historians finds ample confirmation in the recent researches of archeologists among the prehistoric tombs and monuments of Western Slavdom, which provide very material evidence of the existence of the Slavs in that region fully five hundred, if not a thousand years before Christ. The place-names of Poland, too, demonstrate the Slavonic origin of the earliest inhabitants. The river Vistula, for instance—or *Wisla* as it is called in the Polish tongue—was known as the Wisla as far back as history can record, and *Wisla* is a pure Slavonic word. Again, the history of the Slavs themselves reveals the really remarkable fact that their expansion and immigration occurred invariably in two definite directions—southwards or eastwards. From this curious habit—which was probably based on very natural needs—we can hazard more than a guess at the movements of this race and the locality they were likely to settle in.

No exact knowledge is available of the precise limits of ancient Slavdom, but it may be said with certainty that its centre was the territory between the Carpathians, the river Dnieper, and the upper reaches of the Vistula. The neighbours of the early Slavs were—on the north, the Balts and Finns; on the east, the Turco-Tatars and Irenicians; on the south, the Trecs; and on the west, the Gaels. The Germans were at this time confined to the Jutland Peninsula, and only later, in the course of the great European migrations before and after the beginning of the Christian era, did they become close neighbours of the Slavs. The Latin historians, largely ignorant of the exact confines of the Slav territory, ventured to fix on the Vistula as the dividing line between the Slavs and the Germans. This is all that was known of the geographical extent of the Slavs when their name was first mentioned in history. Herodotus hints at their existence (though he calls them: Ἐκύθαι νομάδες Ἐκύθαι ἀροτῆρος Ἀλαζονες

Νευροι), but the first historical reference to them is made by Pliny (in the first century A.D.), Ptolemy, and Tacitus, all of whom speak of a great people inhabiting the land on both sides of the Vistula, and called the Wends (*Venedi, Veneti, Venadi*). Without doubt these Wends were really Slavs, in view both of the conclusions reached by sixth-century historians and of the interesting fact that to this day a section of the Slavs are known to the Germans as Wends. The name *Wends* changed later to *Slavs*, and also to *Ants*.

From the third century B.C., Central and Eastern Europe began to be disturbed by continual migrations, and during this time the Germans, the Danes, and the Huns, among others, changed their country, passing frequently through the Slav territories but never occupying or obtaining them by conquest. Herr Peisker, a German historian, has attempted to show that the Slav territories were either conquered or inhabited by the Germans, and later by the Tatar hordes from the South and East, but his hypothesis is based on philological evidence upon which quite another construction may be put, and which, in view of the ample evidence to the contrary, is quite unreliable.

The Slavs came later to be divided into three distinct sections—the Southern, the Eastern, and the Western. The Slavs of the South extended south of the Carpathians, in the Valley of the Danube, in Illyria, and in the Balkan Peninsula. There they formed, between the seventh and the ninth centuries A.D., those nations we now know as the Bulgars, the Serbs, the Croats, and the Slovenians. The Eastern Slavs, until almost the thirteenth century, had not become a nation, but remained in more or less small groups, without any apparent community of interest or ideas. Only with the growth of the principality of Kieff, and, two centuries later, of that of Moscow, together with the external influences of Poland and Lithuania during the thirteenth and fourteenth

centuries, began the crystallisation of the three great Eastern Slav groups commonly called Russian—the Great, the Little, and the White Russians. This great division or decentralisation of the Slavonic people may be said to have occurred about the fifth century A.D. During the succeeding centuries the Southern and Eastern Slavs, as we have seen, had become reorganised; during the same period the Western Slavs had become divided into three distinct sections: the Serbs (not to be confused with the modern nation of the same name), who inhabited the South-west of Prussia and a part of modern Saxony, and who were soon partly teutonised by the Germans; the Czech group, including the Slovaks and Moravians, which became reorganised as a united people in the ninth century, and settled in Bohemia; and the Lech group, in which were included the Obodrites, the Wiltzi, the Pomeranians (near relations of the Poles), and other tribes who were in the course of the succeeding centuries to form the Polish nation. Of these the Obodrites and the Wiltzi established themselves in the country between the Baltic Sea and the lower reaches of the Oder; while on the banks of the rivers Vistula, Warta, and Pilica, and on the upper reaches of the Oder, settled the Wislanes, the Polanes, the Cuiavians, the Silesians, and the Lenczicians—all the varying elements which were to mingle and unite in the race afterwards called the Poles.

. . . . . .

In view of the generally reliable theory of the existence of the Slavs in Eastern and Central Europe nearly a thousand years before the Christian era, it may seem surprising that there are no records until the fifth century A.D. of even the crudest Slav institution corresponding to the Greek conception of the State. It must be remarked, however, that few travellers visited the country, and the records of the few exceptions leave much to the imagination in their rough impressions of a

widely-scattered people, of whom they saw probably but a few tribes. The chroniclers Procopius and Maurikos, Byzantines of the sixth century A.D., and Masudi, Ibn Rusta, and Muhammed Il Idris, Arabians of three centuries later, all of whom were familiar with the despotism characteristic of the East, have passed down to us two impressions of the administration, such as it was, of the affairs of the various peoples inhabiting the large and rather vague country which we have called Slavdom. These impressions may be roughly summarised in two words, "Anarchy" and "Democracy," words which these chroniclers employed themselves, for lack of better, to describe the political state, as it appeared to them individually, of the people of Slavdom. According to their narratives, which varied, naturally, according to which of the many tribes they met during their stay in the country, there were generally speaking two political institutions in existence among the Slavs—one which they pretty accurately called "Democracy," in which the whole of the tribe met in public assembly to discuss and decide its own affairs; the other, less accurately termed by them "Anarchy," in which the tribes were split up into clans or families, of which the Father or Patriarch was practically the ruler. Thus in each tribe where this form of government found favour there were many petty rulers.

There were two main reasons why the Slavs, until comparatively late in their history, did not establish the centralised Government known in our day as the State. The first and most natural reason was that they did not desire it. When unconfined by artificial restrictions the Slavs seem to have tended rather toward decentralisation, local autonomy, and individual freedom than towards centralisation and collectivism. The fact that they did in some measure accept the latter in the course of centuries does not affect our argument, and at this stage, need not be discussed. The other

and more artificial reason was geographical, and concerned the nature of the country and its relative position to the more civilised parts of Europe. Even to this day, large tracts of that vast and heavily wooded plain in Northern and Eastern Central Europe, which we have called Slavdom or Slavonia, are little more than swamps. So recently as the end of the eighteenth century, it was reckoned that under and around Berlin there were no less than seventy-two lakes of varying size. In the times with which we are concerned Slavdom was certainly almost wholly covered with forests and dotted with innumerable lakes. The difficulties and delays of communication in such a country, inhabited by tribes many days' journey apart, may be readily imagined. Thus Ibrahim Ibn Yakub, an Arabian traveller in the tenth century A.D., took three weeks, he tells us, to travel from Prague to Cracow, a journey that may be accomplished to-day in ten hours. It must be remembered, too, that the early Slavs were near no great European highway—whether by sea or land—and that travellers from Greece and Rome and Byzantium were rare in regions so far north of the Mediterranean. All these influences—some of them rather negative than positive—hindered the evolution of the State among the early Slavs.

The first Slav State and principality of which we can find record was that of Samo, founded by a Frankish merchant of that name, who came from the North of Germany. The State of Samo endured from 623 to 658, and comprised the territory between the rivers Hobola and Drawe. The inhabitants were principally Czechs and Slovaks, who seem to have united under Samo to resist the invasions of the Germans. The next recorded essay in the evolution of a State was that of Moimir, who, about the year 830, founded Grand Moravia, comprising the provinces to be known later as Bohemia and Moravia, and parts of Southern Poland, Silesia, and Panonia. Grand Moravia survived longer than its

predecessor, and saw three princes succeed its founder—Rastie (846-870), Swietopelk, or Swatopluk (870-894), its third and greatest ruler, and Moimir II., who was to witness its fall. Swietopelk is best known for having first introduced Christianity among the Western Slavs. He founded the first Slav Archbishopric in Moravia, and invited Cyril and Metode, the great Slav ecclesiastics, to baptise his subjects. Not long after the death of Swietopelk, Moimir II., who succeeded him, found himself unable to repel the repeated attacks of the Magyars and the Germans, or to ward off the impending dissolution of his principality. A great Magyar invasion, coinciding with the German conquest of Bohemia, saw the end of Moravia.

Farther north the Obodrites, the Welets, and the Pomeranians combined in separate but rather loosely-organised Grand Duchies in order, presumably, also to resist the invading Germans; and with such success at first as to conquer and commit to the flames the German town of Hamburg, in 983. Already, however, the Emperor Otto had succeeded in weakening their strength, and nearly two centuries later, in 1150, the great Slav town of Brandenburg (*Braniebor* in the Slav tongue) was surprised and seized by the Margraf Albrecht von Barnstedt. It was thus, then, that out of the turmoil and travail of the innumerable petty wars carried on at this time, emerged finally the State of Poland, and the small, but for some time comparatively civilised State of Bohemia.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNINGS OF POLAND—MIESZKO AND BOLESLAW

Bë eásten Maroaro lande is Visle land, and bë eásten tham sind Datia thâ thë ju vaeron Gottan ("To the east of Maroaro is Vistula-land, and eastwards of Vistula-land is Datia, where the Goths live"). So reads the curious geography of King Alfred. About the same time an anonymous Bavarian chronicler refers to Vistula-land under the name of Vuislane; and the same word is used by the author of the lives of Cyril and Metode, the Slav apostles already mentioned. From the writings of Ibrahim Ibn Yakub, as well as from early Czech, Slav, and German historians, we get a rough, but on the whole consistent idea of the origin of Poland.

As always, the early chroniclers of Poland could not refrain from attempting to trace its history in conformity with Greek, Latin, and Hebrew traditions. In the most naïve and ingenious fashion they interwove early Polish traditions with their notions of ancient Europe. In olden times, we are told, three brothers—Lech, Czech, and Russ (like the three sons of Noah)—settled in Slavdom and founded the three great branches of the Slav family. Afterwards, the tale runs, Lech founded Gniesno, the oldest capital of Poland. Later the scene of the narrative is transferred to Cracow, a town founded by Cracus, who killed a dragon. His daughter, Wanda, became a mythical heroine, who killed herself to evade the oppression of the Germans. After her death the people fell upon evil days, and Alexander the Great (*sic*) seized the opportunity to invade

the country, only to be defeated by Leszek, the latter, by virtue of his success, receiving the title of Duke of Poland. After many years the succession fell to Popiel, grandson of the first Duke, who ruled evilly, and was dethroned. In his place was chosen a peasant named Piast, of virtuous and valiant character, and the legendary founder of the dynasty of that name; a figure who, real or mythical, long remained enshrined in the hearts of the people. And finally Mieszko, the great-grandson of Piast, emerges from the twilight that partly obscures this period as the first historical (as distinct from mythical) ruler of Poland.

Even modern historians have not hesitated to decorate the early history of Poland with legends as picturesque as they are untrustworthy. Among this category must be placed one which commonly found credence in the early part of last century, and which, based apparently on the accepted fact of the early organisation and government of the Russians by Norse settlers, attributes the bourgeonings of the Polish conception of the State to the same influence. Other theories, proceeding from such trifling data as the name Lech at first given to the Poles, attempted very naïvely to demonstrate that the erection of that at first crude, but afterwards complex edifice called the Polish State, was clearly due to outside intervention, conquest, invasion—to anything but the natural needs of the Poles themselves. The most commendable theory commonly held to-day is that the final construction of the Polish State was in itself natural: the result of several centuries of evolution, of the needs and desires of the people.

We know that in the ninth and the early part of the tenth century the banks of the rivers Oder and Wistula were inhabited by the following tribes: the Wislanes, the Silesians, the Opolanes, the Masovians, the Lenczicians, the Cuiavians, and the Polanes. These tribes had already attained to a higher degree of civilisation than their neighbours. Travellers

wrote of the wealth of their communities (the Polanes, we are told, were possessed of twenty very rich towns). The frequent German invasions at this period only gave an impetus to the gradual combination of all the tribes for their mutual advantage and defence, and it would seem that the Polanes, whether from superior wealth, or numbers, or intelligence, finally gained supremacy among the allies, each section of whom eventually assumed or became known by the name of its ally-in-chief.

It seems probable that Ziemowit and Ziemomysl, respectively the grandfather and father of Mieszko, had achieved the massing of the six tribes under the banner and suzerainty of the Polanes; so that Mieszko, on his father's death, became the ruler of the nucleus of the future Poland.

The first historic mention of Mieszko I. is the record of the warfare waged by the latter against Wichman, a German adventurer, as related by the chronicler Widukind, about the year 963. Thus was announced the definite arrival of Poland into European history. In the light of later events it is not surprising that Polish recorded history should begin with a war against the Germans, or that subsequent centuries should see many such wars. They took the form of a definite resistance to a deliberate German pressure from the West. Since two impregnable barriers, the sea and the Alps, obstructed her advance North and South, and the growing strength of France blocked the way to the West, it was natural that Germany should seek expansion in the only direction open to her—the Slav countries in the East. To this end the Emperor had fortified the Eastern *Marken* or Marches and entered upon a long series of assaults on the Slav territories, with such success at first as to force Mieszko, in the year 963, to acknowledge his suzerainty in respect of the Polish territory between the German Marches and the river Warta.

Until this time Poland had been able to develop and extend

herself freely and along her own lines, for between her and Germany, her powerful neighbour on the West, lay the lands of the Elbian or Polabian Slavs and of those inhabiting the country known to-day as Brandenburg. As the most barren tracts of land are those immediately bordering and buffeted by the sea, and the most fertile are to be found a few miles inland, so the Western Slavs most affected by the influence and attack of the Germans rapidly disintegrated and lost their national and racial character, while the Poles, protected by a natural bulwark from hostile influence or interference, had time and opportunity to fortify and progress. In the times that preceded her recorded history, Poland was thus able to organise and extend her peoples and territories. From the sorry experience of her neighbours she learnt how to resist the invaders who were not slow in appearing; from the failure and fall of the Western Slavs her chieftains learnt that solidarity, and not dissension, could alone defeat the designs of her enemies. The Obodrites, divided into four dissentient tribes, could not muster a defence strong enough to beat back the whole force of the Emperor and his allies. The first thought of the Polish leaders, then, must be to unite the scattered members of the Polish family into one State, united and indivisible; not merely an alliance, like that of the Obodrites, in time of war. Secondly, a permanent military force must be established against all comers.

Mieszko I. had already organised a standing army corps of about 13,000 men, adequately provisioned and stationed in the various strongholds of the country. This corps was perfected by his son and successor, Boleslaw, and its strength increased to 16,000, and finally to 20,000 men. Such an army, united and disciplined, at that time represented a very considerable force. This military organisation, however, would not have sufficed to save Poland from the encroachments of the almost all-conquering Teutonic Empire and its allies.

Subtler methods than that of a counter demonstration of military strength were necessary, and Mieszko and Boleslaw proved equal to the occasion. The former was first among the Slavs to think of achieving a peace between the Slav princes and peoples. His method—a subtle piece of diplomacy at that time—was to marry Dombrowka, a princess of Bohemia, in the year 966, and by this means to secure not merely the neutrality but the aid and friendship of this important Slav nation. His son, Boleslaw, pursued the same policy with regard to the group of Russian principalities around Kieff. Having married a daughter of a Russian pretendant to the throne of Kieff, he helped his father-in-law to achieve his ambitions, thus gaining for himself a powerful ally on the Eastern borders of Poland.

. . . . . .

The most far-sighted and successful of all the actions of these two brilliant princes of Poland, however, was the introduction of Christianity in the year 967. At that time no European nation could hope to be counted as civilised without professing the Christian religion, which alone was associated with Western culture. The Germans, and more particularly the Margraves of the West, pretended to the distinction of conquering the Slavs in order to convert them. Not always, however, was the Cross carried with the Sword. German missionaries rarely went among the Poles, and not one is mentioned as having raised the Cross in Polish territory before the baptism of the Polish princes. We are told, it is true, of the establishment of an archbishopric at Magdeburg, and of bishoprics at Havelburg and Merseburg, but their objects were political rather than religious, as may be seen from the memoirs of Thietmar, bishop of the latter town, and a contemporary of Mieszko and Boleslaw. Thietmar's work is curiously full for a Christian bishop of complacent records of battles and bloodshed. It is typical of the rude and rather

reluctant Christianity of the many half-pagan priests of the period.

Even before the final and formal acceptance of Christianity by the Polish rulers, its tenets had been introduced into the country from Bohemia, and, through the Russian principalities, even from Constantinople. Also it is more than probable that in the district of Cracow, which from the end of the ninth century belonged to the Duchy of Grand Moravia, Christianity had already gained ground. It is not impossible, therefore, that the fall of this Duchy saw a Bishopric established at Cracow. The works of recent Polish historians would seem to demonstrate that Cyril and Metode, the great Slav apostles, visited and made converts among the Poles, and in support of this contention it is claimed that the early Polish Catholics used the Slav ritual introduced by these missionaries. However, their influence was never fully established, and when Mieszko descended into the waters of baptism the priests who supported him on either hand were probably Bohemian.

Her acceptance of Christianity at the hands of the priests of Rome defined very distinctly for Poland her line of evolution. While the Russians through their religious relations with Constantinople—which was then, almost as it is to-day, in Europe but not of it, a quite peculiar citadel of Orientalism on the very flanks of Europe—while the Russians were entertaining, as it were, and becoming overwhelmed by the vanguards of Orientalism, the Poles had voluntarily, and quite literally become Crusaders in a special sense; outposts of Christian culture, of the civilisation of Rome and the Latin spirit. And this heavy charge, then and during the succeeding brilliant centuries of her history, Poland faithfully fulfilled, against the influence of Byzantium and the bodily menace of the Mongol and the Turk.

Her connection with the Church of Rome, however, gave

Poland another and more strategic advantage in her relations with Germany. The conversion of Poland to Christianity made possible a direct alliance with those countries whence mediæval civilisation mostly came, or flourished most magnificently—France and Italy. We have remarked that the Germans favoured conversion by the sword rather than by the Cross, and that few German missionaries crossed the frontier into Poland; and that in consequence it was precisely the French and the Italians (not to mention the Czechs) who first raised the Cross in Polish territory. These pioneers of Christianity in Poland—Benedictine monks, Eremites, and Cistercians—came from the monasteries of Liège, Clugny, and Monte Casino, and with them came the light and learning of the Western world, and the knowledge of Latin, then the only medium of science and letters.

. . . . . .

In as real a sense as that in which we mention Charlemagne and Alfred the Great, Polish history not only began with Mieszko and Boleslaw, but was founded and created by them. In addition to defining the future development of Polish politics, these two rulers were responsible for the first sharp cleavage among the Slavs of Central and Northern Europe, a cleavage in which the Eastern sections of that race clung to Orientalism, and the Western sections went over to Rome and the religion and culture of the West. Also an opposite and hostile policy was adopted by Poland against both the powerful neighbours who menaced her well-being; and the practice and realisation of this policy were made possible by the success of Boleslaw in uniting under his rule all the tribes and territories which were to form the Poland of the future.

In character and appearance both men were enormously different. Mieszko was a diplomat, with an eye more to the interior administration of his country than to conquest; though he was sensible enough to found the beginnings of a

military organisation. He thought it not easy nor even possible to oppose the designs of Germany; and though he quarrelled with the Margraves, he respected the Emperor. In this policy he seems to have been influenced not so much by personal cowardice as by a lack of confidence in his own power and that of Poland, and being the latest he thought himself perhaps the least of the European princes converted to Catholicism. Boleslaw, although he brilliantly fulfilled the task begun by his father, differed from him greatly in character and personality. Of huge physical proportions, and a redoubtable warrior—he was almost invariably engaged in war with German Margraves, Russian princes, Czechs, and even the Emperor himself—Boleslaw seldom knew defeat, and even then often turned it to advantage. Acknowledging no suzerainty but that of the Pope, he liberated Poland from German influence and intervention; achieved, by force or strategy, the designs of his father; strengthened the defences of his country and her relations with Rome; acted as mediator in important questions affecting the Russians and Bohemians; extended his power and influence even to the Court of the Emperor and the kingdom of Hungary; and finally (and first among the early rulers of Poland) crowned himself king, and peer of the sovereigns of Europe. Such ambition and such a career, even for those days of royal adventurers and peasants made kings, had no parallel in the history of contemporary Europe.

With two consecutive rulers of the calibre of Mieszko and Boleslaw, therefore, Poland was ably equipped for her early struggles for separate nationality. As we have seen, the elder man appears first in history in 963. As the result of his defeat at the hands of Count Wichman and the Margrave Gero, Mieszko was forced for some time to recognise the suzerainty of the Emperor in respect of the lands between Germany and the river Warta. In 966, however, he formed

the powerful alliance already mentioned by his marriage with Dombrowka, a princess of Bohemia, and his baptism in the Christian faith took place shortly afterwards. Only a few years later he founded the first Polish bishopric at Poznan, under the authority of the Archbishop of Magdeburg. The monk Jordan became the first Polish bishop.

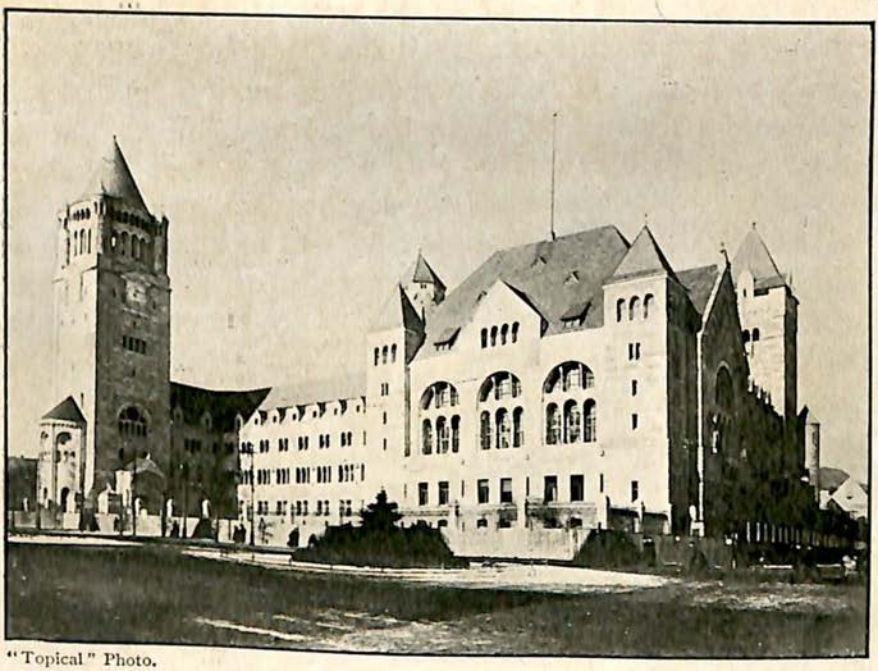
From this time Poland exercised a potent influence both in the external and the internal politics of Germany, more particularly after the hostilities of the period 967-972, in which her excellent military organisation proved her a power to be reckoned with in Eastern Central Europe. Later, during the interregnums of 973 and 983, the aid of Polish arms successively secured the Imperial Crown of Germany to the respective pretenders who appeared. Meanwhile Poland had been subject to attacks from other quarters. Wladimir the Great, Prince of Kieff, had invaded and subdued the territory known as Red Russia; while the Czechs had invaded, and for a short time occupied, the district of Cracow. Mieszko, therefore, in order to safeguard himself on the west, allied himself with the Emperor in expeditions against the Obodrites in the years 982, 986, and 991. Mieszko died in 992, having divided his kingdom, after the fashion of the Slavs, among his sons, with Boleslaw as their chief. Not long after, however, Boleslaw drove out his brothers and his step-mother Oda, and re-united all the Polish provinces under his rule. In or about the year 999 he recaptured Cracow, and succeeded in extending his frontiers in other directions.

The policy of Boleslaw Chobry (the Brave), was that of federating all the Western Slav races under one rule, and in its pursuit he conquered all Pomerania between the Oder and the Vistula and would have liked even to subdue the Prussians. Religious differences proved the principal obstacle to the realisation of this ambition, however, though even these he endeavoured to surmount by converting his savage neighbours



Exclusive News Agency.

Warsaw—the Monument to the Poet Mickiewicz.

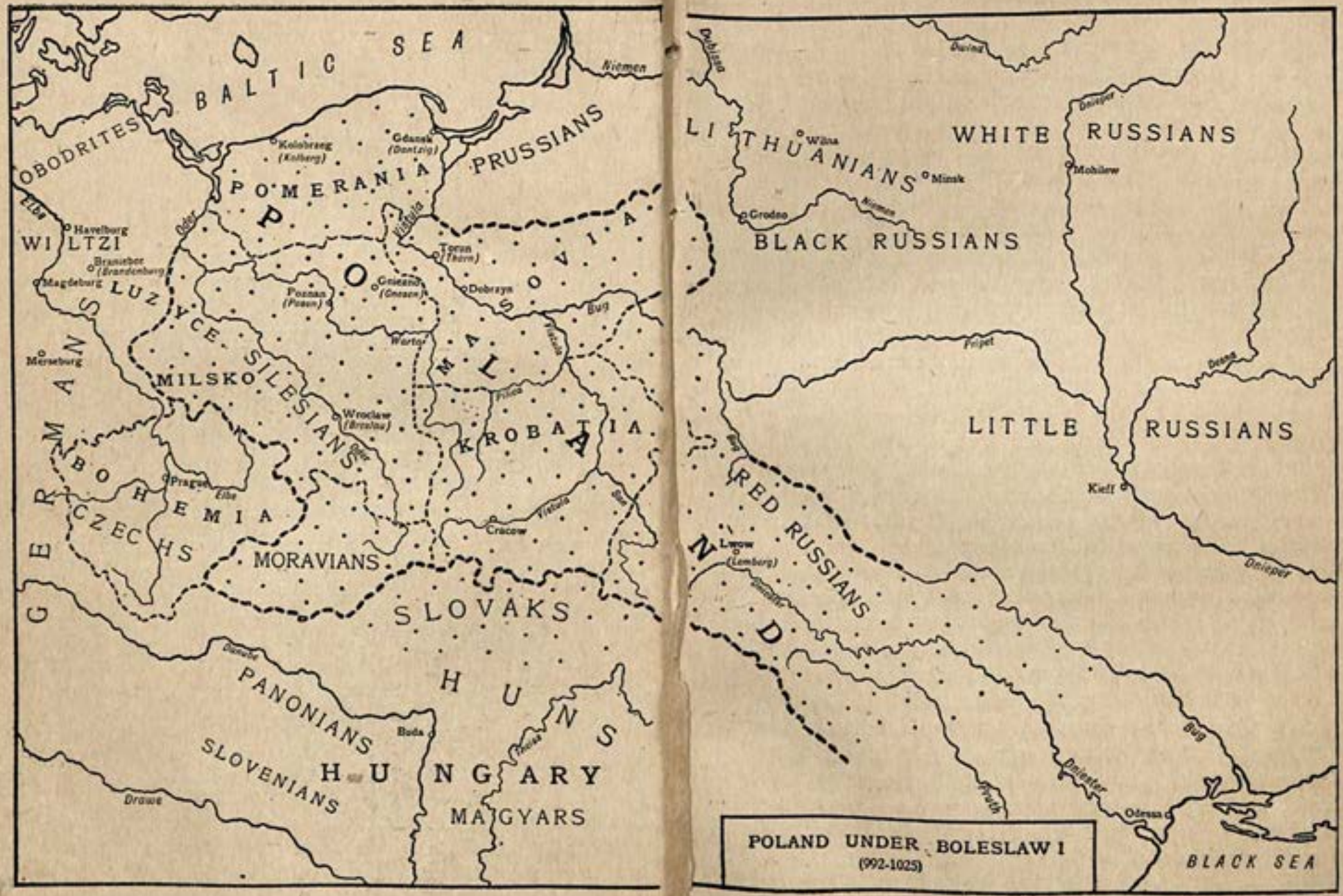


"Topical" Photo.

The Royal Palace at Posen.

to Christianity. Among the missionaries he despatched on this errand was Adalbert (Wojciech), Bishop of Prague, who was finally martyred (997), and became the patron saint of Poland. About the year 1000 Poland became one of the greatest Powers in Europe, as much by reason of the size of her territory as of her superior military organisation and political alliances. A sister of Boleslaw (known in Scandinavia under the name of Siegfrieda Stavrada) became the wife of Swen, King of Denmark, and the mother of Canute of England; while Adelaide Belaknegini, his father's sister, became the Queen of Gejza of Hungary and gave birth to a son, Stephen, who was later to introduce the Christian faith into this kingdom, and to become its patron saint. The year 1000 saw the foundation of the archbishopric of Gniesno, to which the bishops of Cracow, Wroclaw (Breslau), and Kolobrzeg (Kolberg) owed allegiance. This event finally established Poland's absolute independence of German influence or authority, and later proved to be one of the greatest triumphs of the policy of Boleslaw, for at that time the existence of an independent archbishopric in a State demonstrated its absolute autonomy in internal affairs. It is of interest to note that among other States Denmark and Bohemia only achieved this ecclesiastical independence many years later.

Meanwhile Otto III., the Emperor who indirectly helped Boleslaw to this end, had died, and the German attitude changed towards the Poles. The latter, who at this time took a prominent part in the affairs of Bohemia, which country they even occupied during the period 1003-1004, became engaged in hostilities with Germany which lasted, with but brief interruption, for fourteen years. Poland's military prowess, however, finally forced the Germans to acknowledge her independence, and even to surrender the provinces of Luzyce and Milsko, which they had seized some time before. This recognition was sealed by the Peace of Budziszyn in 1018.



POLAND UNDER BOLESLAW I
(992-1025)

In the meantime, however, Poland had lost her influence in Bohemia. She was forced to abandon her projected subjection of the Polabian Slavs by renewed hostilities with the Russians. Twice Boleslaw invaded Russia, in 1013 and 1018, and on the second occasion succeeded in capturing Kieff (of which he made his son-in-law, Jaroslaw, Grand Duke) and in reconquering Red Russia. Thus ended Boleslaw's last war, and during his remaining years he devoted himself mainly to the internal organisation of Poland. In 1025 he crowned himself king, with the blessing of the Pope, but in the same year, after but a brief enjoyment of his new dignity, and having hardly attained middle age, the ashes of this Polish Charlemagne and real founder of the future greatness of this country were laid to rest in his chief city of Gniesno.

. . . . . .

At the death of Boleslaw Chobry, Poland had attained a degree of influence and extent beyond which she was not destined to rise for several centuries. She had absorbed almost all the Western Slav states, including Bohemia; and the dead king's sceptre had been wielded over territory of about 130,000 square kilometres in area, and his subjects numbered almost two millions—a not inconsiderable figure at that period, when the population of France amounted in the first half of the fourteenth century to not more than ten millions. He had united all the Poles under his rule and crowned himself King of Poland, owning no allegiance, spiritual or temporal, to other than the Pope. As has been said, the crowning triumph of his reign was the bold establishment of an independent Polish Church, subject only to the authority of Rome; and this, more perhaps than any other factor, finally forged and hammered fast the union of the Polish-speaking populations of Europe.

As his career makes evident, Boleslaw was one of the few vigorous monarchs who have occupied the throne of Poland.

During his reign the military progress of the nation was as marked as its commercial prosperity. New cities were built; trade flourished and foreign merchants were encouraged to enter the country; and more important than all, schools had been established. In the government and constitution of the kingdom, however, there was as yet no element of popular or democratic control. The *szlachta* had not developed into that tremendous democracy of nobles that controlled the destinies of Poland during the centuries to come. The political condition of Poland was that of a military autocracy, with the towns and places of the country held by the king's castellans and the king's men. The frequent wars filled the land with captives, who naturally became slaves. And over all was the king, with his council of princes and bishops.

CHAPTER III

MIESZKO II. AND CASIMIR THE RESTORER

SUCH astounding progress in the union and crystallisation of populations so diffused, and of provinces so difficult of intercommunication, was too sudden to continue. Soon after the death of Boleslaw a reaction set in, and signs of division and disaffection were manifested, of which the seeds had been sown by Boleslaw himself, in the manner in which he partitioned his kingdom among his sons. The eldest being illegitimate, the second son, Mieszko II., had been named head of the kingdom; but this prince soon seized his brother's territory and proclaimed himself King of all Poland.

Thus was ushered in a period of incessant turmoil for the country. Bezprym, one of the brothers whom the King had despoiled, sought refuge in the principality of Kieff, where he planned the overthrow of Mieszko; while in the meantime almost all the neighbouring rulers seized the opportunity to invade Poland. The King's own cousin, Stephen of Hungary, raided the Slovak country, which province was lost to Poland thenceforth. Subsequently Mieszko, as a counter-stroke to the alliance between the Emperor Conrad II. and Canute of Denmark, was obliged to come to terms with Stephen, and by the cession of the Slovak province in 1027 obtained his co-operation in an expedition against the Germans. Their joint forces raided the Emperor's territory as far westwards as the river Laba (Elbe), causing great damage to life and property (1028). The two subsequent campaigns conducted in 1029

and 1030 against Poland and her Hungarian ally resulted in the defeat of the Germans; but in the meantime Brzetyslaw of Bohemia had, in the year 1029, invaded and conquered Moravia, which country also was never regained by Poland.

The greatest blow to Mieszko's power, however, had yet to come. At the instigation of the Emperor and of the exiled brothers of Mieszko an alliance was formed against him by all the neighbouring princes (even his ally of Hungary deserting him) and Poland was attacked on all sides. The Emperor seized Luzyce (Lausitz); and Canute of Denmark took Pomerania; while to the share of Jaroslaw, Grand Duke of Kieff, fell the castles of Czerwien. There remained no option to this harassed ruler but to do homage to the Emperor and renounce the territories conquered by him; but this bid for peace was hardly made before his brother Bezprym, his intrigues having at last obtained him a sufficient following, forced Mieszko to flee to Bohemia. The subsequent death of Bezprym permitted the fugitive to return to Poland, but he was obliged by the Emperor to share his kingdom with two German princes, kinsmen of Conrad; and as a result of the constant warfare he was obliged to wage against these intruders—though he ultimately succeeded in dismissing them—Mieszko died, leaving his kingdom in great disorder.

. . . . . .

The meagre records of the time furnish but a poor picture of the period following Mieszko's death. It is probable, however, that he was succeeded by Casimir, the child of his marriage with Rycheza (Ryxa), a daughter of Ezo, palatine of Lorraine. From his mother Casimir acquired a marked taste for science and a deep devotion to the Christian faith. His education was exceptional, his early life having been spent with learned clerics, and from this fact probably arose the legend cherished in later years that he had himself been a monk, and had re-

linquished his religious duties to wear the crown of Poland. However this may be, it is certain that the clouds of conflict which had gathered in his father's reign grew to their climax in his. The pagan element of the population, together with the increasingly important merchant class, rose in rebellion, and in 1037 Casimir fled with his mother to Germany. For a short time the insurgents had it all their own way. The internal confusion in the country gave one leader opportunity to proclaim himself independent ruler of the province of Masovia; but the richest spoils of this rebellion fell to an outsider, Brzetyslaw, prince of Bohemia, who raided Poland in 1037 with such thoroughness that the country did not fully recover for a hundred years. Half the kingdom was ransacked by this Bohemian freebooter; the largest Polish towns, among them Cracow, Wroclaw (Breslau), Gniesno, and Gdecz, were plundered and destroyed; thousands of the population were slain and great treasures taken. The ruin wrought in the town of Gniesno was so complete that, according to a chronicler writing a century later, wolves made their lair in the cathedral, unmolested in that desert place.

The very success of the raider Brzetyslaw, in occupying a province so near to the German domain as that of Silesia, gave the Emperor Henry III. reason for wishing Casimir restored to his throne—a reason supported by his kinship with the mother of the fugitive. Casimir was accordingly furnished with a small force of Germans, and made his reappearance on Polish soil—an event acclaimed (according to a pretty legend of the time) by the very trees of the forest, so great was the ravage sustained by Poland at the hands of the invader. Casimir was indeed welcomed by a considerable section of his people, chiefly the clergy and other classes imbued with the spirit of the civilisation penetrating their country from the West. Others of the people supported Maslaw, Count of

Masovia, a personage of some pretensions who had become prominent in earlier reigns as leader of the Cenophobes, a party that strenuously resisted the intrusion of foreign culture and custom. Out of this rivalry arose an internal struggle that lasted for six years, at the end of which period Casimir, who in the meantime had developed valuable qualities of leadership, succeeded in conciliating the malcontents and overthrowing Maslaw.

Casimir, as this troublous period revealed, was rather a statesman than a soldier, and the events which earned him the title of Restorer and Rebuilder of Poland were triumphs of diplomacy and not of arms. Desiring peace, even at the price of pride, Casimir arranged an alliance with the Emperor, whereby he secured the latter's support against Bohemia, and in return acknowledged Henry as suzerain, though this title was never more than a name. Danger on the eastern frontier was warded off by Casimir's marriage with Mary Dobrognieva, daughter of Wladimir the Great, Grand Duke of Kieff. A friendship thus effected with so important a State permitted Casimir a free hand in his relations with the troublesome provinces lying on his eastern borders, and completed his system of defence against the greed or malice of his more powerful neighbours.

This much-needed respite from the practice of war afforded the nation a grateful breathing-space in which to learn the neglected arts of peace. As has been already remarked, Casimir had received an education only usual in those days among clerics, and his early acquaintance with the monks was now renewed in his patronage of their orders and his concessions to their cause. Ruined cities were rebuilt, and the wrecked trade of the country slowly restored, at his instigation; and though at his death in 1058 Casimir left a kingdom reduced in extent, Poland was stronger for his reign, and more strictly a unified nation even than in the time of Boleslaw.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAST OF THE EARLY KINGS

CASIMIR'S son and successor, Boleslaw the Bold, unlike his predecessors on the throne of Poland, was able immediately to assert the full authority of his title; whereas the previous kings had acceded to a throne to which there were other and equally powerful pretenders, and had come into possession of their inheritance more by force of arms than of argument.

Boleslaw found himself, on his father's death, and thanks to his father's diplomacy, unmenaced by rivals at home or abroad. Uniting in himself the warlike qualities of his great-grandfather, Boleslaw the Brave, and in a lesser degree the statesmanship of his father, the new King proved himself capable of combating either danger.

On two occasions Boleslaw restored Izaslaw, Grand Duke of Kieff, to the throne from which that ruler had been driven by his insurgent brothers. The Polish King's price for this assistance was the province of Red Russia, or, as it should more strictly be called, Red Ruthenia, which, however, did not long remain a part of Poland. Following the same policy of profiting by the domestic dissensions of his neighbours, Boleslaw helped Bela I. of Hungary and his sons to conclude in their favour a civil war which was then in progress in that country. The Slowak province, however, which had been lost by Poland in the previous reign, was not conceded to Boleslaw, as he had hoped, in return for this aid. More than once in his reign the Polish standard was borne into

Bohemia, and though from these, as from the other wars waged by him, no notable territorial acquisitions resulted, Boleslaw succeeded in making the military power of Poland recognised and respected by his neighbours.

The final test and triumph of the policy of this ruler was his coronation, at the hands of the Pope's legates, as King of all Poland—a climax which had not been achieved by any Polish king since Mieszko II. To grasp the full significance of this ceremony it must be understood that at that time a king rarely had the actual authority over his dominion which his title claimed. His supremacy was either contested by rivals at home, or curtailed by suzerains abroad. The Crown and its investment, therefore, were real and valued symbols of a ruler's authority and independence; and in the case of Boleslaw his coronation asserted his independence of all outside influence or control, even that of the Emperor's self.

. . . . . .

In this reign the reverberations reached Poland of the struggle that was then shaking the foundations of Europe—a struggle, curiously enough, chiefly remembered in Poland, as in England, for the murder under almost identical circumstances of St Stanislaw and of St Thomas à Becket. This struggle may be briefly described as one for supremacy between Church and State, and as such must be regarded for the purposes of this work strictly from the standpoint of its effects on Polish history, different as they are from those on that of England.

The Struggle of the Investiture—as it was called from its merely nominal issue, that of the appointment of bishops by King or Pope—reached Poland when the Church, here but a century or so old, was in the first flush of its vigour and influence. The internal dissensions which diminished its power in other countries had in this not yet made their appearance; and still the only source of Latin learning and

Christian culture, it had this immense advantage over the conservative and ultra-nationalist party which alone in Poland could be brought to oppose it. The struggle between the Roman Church and the Polish State resolved itself then into a contest, as bitter as it was brief, between foreign learning and native conservatism, between Western culture and Eastern custom—and the West won. As we have said, in England as in Poland, this rivalry reached its climax (and in Poland its culmination) in the murder of the leader of the clerical party.

Piercing the maze of myth in which the truth of this event has become entangled, it seems probable that Stanislaw, the Bishop of Cracow, and at that time the most prominent churchman in Poland, met his death at the instigation, if not at the very hands, of the King. According to the general consensus of popular tradition he was killed in the Cathedral while reading Mass, and his body cut to pieces by the swords of Boleslaw and his courtiers. As a concession to folk-lore it may be added that four eagles from the four quarters of Heaven came to gather up the martyr's dismembered body, which being again united in the semblance of a human being was reported to have worked many miracles.

The result of this deed naturally was a powerful reaction of popular feeling in favour of Rome. Though it is not true, as some chronicles maintain, that the whole country was placed under an interdict, it is certain that Boleslaw was excommunicated, and soon after fled with his sons to Hungary, where later he died an obscure death. His brother, Wladislaw Herman, was elected by common consent to occupy the throne.

. . . . . .

The administration of Wladislaw did little to ameliorate the troubled condition of the country during this period. Though a cautious and conciliatory ruler, he succeeded

neither in pleasing his friends nor in placating his foes; and his supremacy was warmly contested by Sieciech, an able leader of the hostile section. During this reign the Czechs of Bohemia and the Magyars of Hungary profited by the internal strife in Poland to raid the country, with almost uninterrupted success; the city of Cracow was seized by the invaders, though not held for long. On his death, in 1102, Wladislaw divided the kingdom between his sons Zbigniew and Boleslaw.

. . . . . .

The more important part of Poland fell to the lot of Boleslaw Krzywousty (the Wry-mouthed), whose reign is remarkable less for its almost uninterrupted turmoil, its hardly broken sequence of battles, than for the final and decisive attempt of the Emperor at that period to assert an active suzerainty over the Poles. The reign also marked Poland's complete acceptance of Christian civilisation and Western ideas, and her ultimate overthrow of the pagan resistance. Both these issues, so vital to the future fate of Poland, were hazarded in the campaigns begun by Boleslaw against Pomerania.

A glance at the map will show that the position of this State, bordered to the north by the Baltic, to the west by Germany, and to the south and east by Poland, held powerful strategic possibilities in regard to the town of Gdansk, or Dantzig—then, as now, Poland's only important port. The hostility of Pomerania could not but be a source of grave danger to the security of Poland. Thus the rivalry between Boleslaw and the Emperor Henry V. for supremacy in Pomerania swiftly raised issues of much graver import than the mere tribute of a petty neighbouring province. The fact that alone among the peoples kindred to the Poles, the Pomeranians still clung to paganism, added a deeper significance to the problem confronting Poland: the subjection of this country meant its conversion to the Christian faith. The

efforts of his brother Zbigniew to incite the Pomeranians against him clinched the matter for Boleslaw. He entered on the first of what proved to be a series of seven campaigns against that people.

Other wars followed, or were in progress at the same time. So incessant were the military activities of this reign that, so the saying went, King Boleslaw did not leave the saddle in seven years. The Emperor himself led two expeditions into Poland: the first returning without much hurt either inflicted or sustained; the second achieving more success in laying waste a part of the country and besieging the town of Wroclaw, but being finally repulsed by the Poles at Hundsfeld (1109), a place so called from the fact that the corpses lay there in such numbers that they could not be buried, and were devoured by the dogs. It was before this battle, according to the chroniclers, that an envoy named Skarbek, being sent by Boleslaw to the German camp, was taken by Henry and shown the Imperial treasury. On being asked by the monarch if he thought the Poles could withstand a power so wealthy, Skarbek is reputed to have cast his own gold ring into the Treasury, with the cry, "Go gold to gold! we Poles will stick to iron." However this may be, "Hab Dank" (Thank you), the reply with which the Emperor is credited on this occasion, is still the motto of the Skarbek family in Poland.

Where Boleslaw's policy was purely offensive, however, the results were less fortunate for Poland. His meddling with the internal affairs of Hungary, where an insurrection was in progress against Bela II. (Boleslaw supporting the rebels), directly provoked that monarch, in alliance with Bohemia, into an invasion of Polish territory which was with difficulty repulsed; and Boleslaw was forced to abandon his policy of intervention in Hungary. A war with the Grand Duchy of Kieff, in connection with what was now becoming an

apparently interminable dispute over the ownership of Red Russia, was equally barren of result.

The war against the Emperor and the Pomeranians, bitter and bloody as it was, settled for centuries the contest between Germany and Poland—the one for dominion, the other for independence. In the treaty signed at Merseburg in 1135, between the Emperor Henry V. and Boleslaw, it was agreed that the latter should pay tribute and do homage only in respect of the province of Pomerania, thus ceded to Poland. From that time, during the whole of her national existence, no German Emperor could claim to be overlord of Poland.

. . . . . .

In spite of his tempestuous and crowded life it is neither paradoxical nor untrue to say that the most far-reaching feature of Boleslaw's reign occurred at his death. As we have noted earlier in this history, it was the custom of the Slav rulers to divide their dominions, at their decease, equally among their sons. The unfortunate results of this principle had been experienced by Boleslaw himself, and in spite of the strength and longevity of the tradition, he determined at least to modify it in respect of his own heirs. Accordingly he arranged that henceforth, not the eldest member of the senior branch (as is the Western custom), but the oldest individual member of the family should, in addition to inheriting the territory that would ordinarily become his, exercise an overlordship over the whole kingdom, and also receive the tribute due to Poland from Pomerania. As was only to be expected from such a sorry effort to patch up an outworn principle, the scheme was found to be impracticable as a permanent reform. Only thirty years after the death of Boleslaw, the overlordship fell, under the changed law of succession, to his youngest son Casimir, who failed, however, to hold this dignity long.

Thereafter it happened that during the two hundred years following the death of Boleslaw III. no single king reigned in Poland, and the country was divided into a great number of small States (at one time as many as seventy-two), each with its own ruler.



Exclusive News Agency.

Monument to Stephen Batory in Cracow Cathedral.



"Topical" Photo.

Street Scene in Cracow.

CHAPTER V

POLAND AT THE DEATH OF BOLESLAW III

UNDER these early kings and princes the structure of Polish society underwent manifold changes. The transforming factors were mainly these: the crystallisation and centralisation of the State, and the introduction of Christianity. The patriarchal life of the peasantry now took on a new shape; social differentiation began; new classes appeared. Only a powerful internal organisation rendered possible the union of separate tribes against invasion and attack, the maintenance of their national existence, and ultimately, the extension of the new State's boundaries by the conquest of neighbouring territories.

The powers of king and kingship in those days formed the judicial basis of the State. The king was the real representative of the nation in its collective life, the real ruler of his people in peace and war. His power was practically unlimited, his actions accountable to no man. Though he sometimes consulted the aristocracy (then formed of the high clergy and the king's officers and courtiers) he was in no wise bound to follow their advice. All land and property were considered his in no mere nominal fashion; and he might impose any tax—either in money or kind, or in military or industrial service—to maintain wars, as well as defray the expense of his own Court and administration. Deserving soldiers were rewarded with lands, and with captives to cultivate them; nevertheless either might be reclaimed at the king's pleasure.

The officers charged by the king with the joint functions of judge, policeman, and tax-collector, instead of wages in coin or kind, received often the right of *usufruct* or temporary enjoyment of the rent and produce of certain lands. In a subsequent period of Polish history, however, with the gradual weakening of the monarch's power, the persons in enjoyment of these rights and dignities grew more and more powerful, and exacted fresh privileges and immunities, until their serfs became completely dependent on them.

Administration was facilitated by the division of the country into towns (*grody*) or strongholds under the governorship of castellans, assisted by judges, treasurers, and bailiffs. Each castellany was subdivided into a number of wards (*opole*) administered by an officer, called in Polish *zupan*. The basis and backbone of the population were free peasants, whose liberties were subject only to the king's power and pleasure. In acknowledgment of the lands they occupied and cultivated these peasants paid tribute and rendered any other services required by the king. They were not bound to a particular estate or holding, and at their will could leave one district and settle elsewhere.

The frequent wars of this period, however, caused the creation of a new class of unfree persons in the State. This slave class consisted of prisoners taken in battle, and were the personal property of the king and his high officers. Forming thus an object of sale and bargain, these chattel-slaves were employed either on personal or public services, and were mainly set to till the soil in the neighbourhood of towns and military encampments. The wars of Boleslaw the Brave thus filled the country with captives from Bohemia, Moravia, and Lusitsia; and their already considerable number was largely increased by the successful expeditions of both Boleslaw the Bold and Boleslaw the Wry-mouthed in Russia, Pomerania, and Ukraina. These chattel-slaves were of course

entirely dependent on the lords into whose possession they passed, and only with the permission of their master could they move from one place to another.

These two classes constituted the economic basis of society. Their occupations were almost exclusively agriculture, hunting, fishing, bee-keeping, and various home industries; and all other classes, with the exception of the townsfolk and traders, profited from their productive labour. Under the incessant menace of retribution at the hands of more powerful masters, the serfs and the peasantry generally remained murmurous but quiescent; but after the death of Mieszko II., and during the interregnum of 1034–1040, they rose in an insurrection which, though directed primarily as a reaction against the new religion, ended in the slaughter of many of the lords and landowners. Churches were looted and destroyed, towns were ruined, and paganism—always more deeply rooted in the countryside than in the towns—was re-established. Order was ultimately restored by Casimir, variously surnamed the Monk or the Rebuilder, who reintroduced Christianity, brought back into the national fold those tribes which had strayed outside and temporarily become independent, and re-established the hierarchy both of officials and clergy. The ruined towns and churches were rebuilt, and the country was once more reduced to order and quiescence by the perpetual threat of the great garrisons scattered by this ruler over his kingdom. Finally the rebellious serfs and peasants were forced to continue in their old obligations.

The numerous and continuous wars of this era steadily advanced the power and prestige of the military class. The latter, recruited partly from the native population and partly from foreigners, who were attracted by the opportunity of becoming speedily wealthy and powerful, participated in order of rank and merit in the division of the spoils of war.

Thus they acquired large numbers of captives, whom they would settle on uncultivated lands granted them liberally by the king. According to the custom then obtaining in Western Europe, where the ownership of land was associated with and devolved upon certain military duties, Boleslaw the Wry-mouthed began to grant landed properties to all the members of this class—from whom in later days sprang the Polish nobility (*szlachta*). Henceforth this class grew steadily in power and importance, and acquired an increasing share in the government of the country, hitherto denied to them. The military class was divided into two sections—the knights or horsemen, clad in coats of mail, and receiving their office and dignity direct from the king; and the shield-bearers or archers, who were foot soldiers. A part of the army formed the bodyguard of the king; the remainder were stationed as garrisons in the towns and military encampments.

The great nobles and officials, at the beginning of the monarchy at least, were not numerous in Poland; and being entirely dependent on the king, they had no real influence on his decisions. The high officials of the kingdom were generally chosen from among the princes of conquered tribes. The highest official was naturally the Commander-in-chief of the army (*wojewoda*). Other officials were vested with various Court functions or occupied administrative and military posts, as for instance the castellans. The wars, though they increased the king's dominions and enlarged his importance, at the same time enriched the aristocracy. As we have seen, the autocratic rule of Boleslaw the Bold provoked a conspiracy of nobles under the leadership of the *wojewoda* Sieciech, with the intention of replacing the King by his weaker brother, under whom the aristocracy expected to enjoy more influence. The clergy who, led by Stanislaw, Bishop of Cracow, were only too ready to seize any opportunity of achieving independence of the King, eagerly joined the conspiracy—with

the tragic result for one at least of them already recorded. The royal authority did not recover from this onslaught until the reign of Boleslaw the Wry-mouthed, whose military ardour and many wars helped to restore to kingship its old dignity. But the recovery was not for long. Boleslaw's division of the country between his sons ultimately undid the monarchical power, and prepared the way for the new and more powerful nobility.

The Church, like other institutions of the State, was subject to the King, who appointed bishops and granted them lands and privileges. The creation by Boleslaw the Brave of the Archbishopric at Gniesno had rendered the Polish Church independent of Germany. With the introduction of Christianity the first schools appeared; and in Poland, as everywhere in the Middle Ages, public instruction was in the hands of the clergy. The chief purpose of these schools seems to have been the education of new priests, as the earliest clergy were of course strange to the Polish speech and Polish manners; and instruction in such schools was given only in foreign languages. Nevertheless those in search of real scholarship were obliged to seek it abroad.

The moral and intellectual status of the priests at this period was very low; their Christianity was naturally but lightly grafted on a pagan stock. The zealous efforts of subsequent reformers to root out remaining traces of paganism in Poland were responsible, unfortunately, for the destruction of many interesting documents which might illuminate the social and religious conditions of early Poland. As against the loss of all copies of national songs and sagas, however, the clergy must be credited with the first attempts to create a literature in Poland. The earliest recorded Polish chronicle, for instance, was written by Gallus, chaplain to Boleslaw the Wry-mouthed.

In the economic life of the country the influence of the

clergy was rapidly felt. They introduced new and superior methods in agriculture. Their considerable properties in land, granted by the King, created a new class of peasants, subject only to the Church. National and individual customs were refined by the introduction of Christianity and the influx of gentle-mannered and scholarly priests from Italy and France. The common religion helped still further to bind the separate tribes into a national body. The influence of the Church on the lives and conditions of the people was strengthened by the many religious orders who, at the King's invitation and under his protection, permanently settled in the country.

Although the main occupation of the country in these early stages of Polish history was agriculture, towns soon sprang into being in the neighbourhood of royal castles and garrisons. Their inhabitants were generally liable to military service, but in the times of peace devoted themselves to trade and barter. In such towns, markets were established for the sale of foreign commodities, which provided the King with a new object of taxation and a fruitful source of revenue. Valuable silks and ornaments were brought from abroad by foreign merchants, who in exchange took from Poland rich furs, horses and slaves.

The rising wealth and fertility of the country was reflected in the court of Boleslaw the Brave, whose splendour and sumptuousness astonished even the Emperor Otto III. on his visit there. As early as the reign of Mieszko I. silver coins were minted in Poland, and those of the reign of Boleslaw the Brave are remarkable for their thickness and weight.

As was natural, the first important towns arose in the western districts, *e.g.* Wroclaw (Breslau), Kruszwica, Gniesno (Gnesen), which towns became prominent in the eleventh century for their support of Boleslaw the Wry-mouthed and Zbigniew, but their interference and intervention in political controversies proved fatal to their prosperity, for they were

severely punished. After their decay the centre of national life was transferred to Little Poland, and especially to the city of Cracow.

From immemorial times iron-smelting has been one of the industries of Poland. Many handicrafts (as it appears from the etymology of their Polish names) were known and were practised there from the remotest antiquity—viz., tailoring, joinery, bakery, carpentry, smithcraft, weaving, shoemaking, and coopery. The earliest Polish dwellings were of wood, stone being introduced with the Christian religion. The religious orders, too, were responsible for the introduction of such decorative trades as house-painting and glazing.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOWNFALL OF THE MONARCHICAL POWER

ALTHOUGH the dying Boleslaw was careful to preserve the unity of the country by investing his eldest son with supreme authority over the other three, the fatal effects of the division could not fail soon to manifest themselves. The younger princes gradually denied the authority of their elder brother in their respective territories, and as the old tribal differences had not altogether disappeared, such disputes—now between all four princes, now between the three younger and the brother named overlord—became so much the more prolonged and grave. Poland as such no longer existed; there remained only the Polish nation.

The various Polish provinces had their separate histories and dynasties. However unfortunate politically, this early partition did not arrest the social and educational progress of the country. Every princely court became a civilising centre. From the political standpoint, of course, Poland had become powerless; but nevertheless the idea and ideal of unity were still alert and alive, and they never failed to take practical form in moments of national emergency. The division of the country and the consequent weakening of royal and princely power afforded an opportunity to both lay and ecclesiastic leaders to extort new privileges for themselves and their families and gain an ever greater influence in public affairs. The class of courtiers and officials naturally increased with the growing number of principalities, courts, and princely

retinues. The spirit of independence penetrated even the clergy, hitherto the obedient tool of the temporal power. The whole Church was then striving for political dominance, and with the help of the lay oligarchy the Polish clergy shook off the fetters of royal authority. Their influence only grew during the consequent Tatar invasions, when the peril and terror of war sent a wave of religious piety and devotion even through the most pagan districts, and rich men gave great sums to the priesthood, and poor men turned monk or mystic. The martyrdom and subsequent canonisation of the Bishop Stanislaw furnished the test and became the triumph of the increasingly powerful clerical party in the State.

At the close of this period a new political class appeared in the country, namely, the foreign merchants, traders, and skilled artisans who settled in Poland at the invitation of one or another of the princes. This party, which laid the foundation of future Polish trade, well knew its value and importance in the young State, and profiting by each turn of the political tide to secure new privileges and concessions, became speedily a powerful factor in the country, even to the extent, on one occasion, of placing its own nominee on the throne of Cracow.

. . . . . .

It was not without a struggle that the triumph of the aristocracy over the royal authority was finally attained. Wladislaw II. (1138–1159), the successor of Boleslaw III., attempted to strengthen the central administration and to reunite the divided kingdom; and he planned to expel his brothers from their appanages. In face of the fierce opposition of both lay and clerical aristocracy, however, he lost the throne of Cracow; and all his endeavours, with and without foreign assistance, failed to get it back. Contrary to the will of Boleslaw the Wry-mouthed, the aristocracy in 1146 elevated Boleslaw the Curly to the throne of the principality

of Cracow. Boleslaw retained their support so long as he followed their counsel, but when, on the death of Wladislaw in 1159, he attempted to restore the lost power of the Crown, they conspired to overthrow him in turn and offer the throne of Cracow to his younger brother Casimir. This plot failed, however, through the unexpected refusal of Casimir to accept the offered dignity; and Boleslaw the Curly remained in possession of Cracow till 1173, when he died.

After his death the province devolved to Mieszko the Old, the eldest member of the family, and a wise and able ruler. The internal policy of Mieszko aimed at the financial weakening of the aristocracy; heavy fines were imposed on unruly nobles, and the posts of chief advantage in the realm were filled with the King's relatives or friends. Nevertheless the nobles seized the first opportunity of surprising Mieszko and forcing him to abdicate before he could resist or summon aid. In 1177 his brother Casimir, surnamed the Just, was proclaimed Duke of Poland.

Casimir, the fifth and youngest son of Boleslaw the Wry-mouthed, was but an infant in arms at his father's death, and was not named in the division of the kingdom. Indebted as he was to the clergy and aristocracy for his crown, he naturally submitted to their demands. At a Congress of clerics and nobles summoned at Leczyca, in 1180, he granted them many considerable concessions, exempting their lands from certain taxes and duties, and renouncing the royal privilege of *jus spalis*, according to which the personal property of a deceased bishop passed to the prince. In return it was agreed by the assembly that the throne of Cracow should be hereditary, and vested in the family of Casimir—a decision which fundamentally departed from the terms of the will of Boleslaw the Wry-mouthed. This Congress of Leczyca laid the foundations of the Polish senate.

Having already united under his sceptre the provinces of Cracow, Sandomir, Great Poland (Póznan excepted), Masovia, and Cuiavia—a triumph attained by no other son of Boleslaw III.—Casimir was now able to extend his territory and influence in the East and particularly in the provinces of Volhynia and Red Russia, where he profited from the quarrels between the Russian princes. In the protracted struggle, however, with his dethroned brother Mieszko the Old (who during his brother's absence actually retook Cracow, though he held it only for a brief period), Casimir was forced to relinquish his suzerainty over the province of West Pomerania.

The struggle for the throne of Cracow—which practically involved the overlordship of all Poland—began with a new force after the death of Casimir in 1194. In 1200 it fell for the third time into the hands of Mieszko the Old, but his policy of strengthening and centralising the royal authority won him many enemies among the nobility, and he only ruled in Cracow for a year. Later, however, this clever and tenacious ruler again succeeded—by reason of the mutual hostility of the lay and clerical leaders—in becoming Prince of Cracow, and in the enjoyment of this title Mieszko died in 1202.

A new danger arose to threaten the authority of his son and successor, Wladislaw, surnamed Langshanks. The reforms introduced into the Polish Church by Pope Gregory VII. had been successful, and the struggle for independence of King and State was now resumed by the clergy under the direction of Innocent III. The opposition offered by Wladislaw, and the death of the palatine Nicholas, his chief henchman, managed to lose him his throne, and in 1206 his territory and title were taken by Leszek the White, son of Casimir the Just. The new Duke of Cracow promptly made terms with the Church, and agreed to reaccept his throne at the hands of the Pope. The reforms of Gregory VII. were reintroduced into Poland, and henceforth the bishops were elected by the

chapters, and their nomination depended no longer on the will of the reigning prince. This voluntary lessening of his authority was inevitably followed by the breaking away from Cracow of the other Polish provinces, and the temporarily reunited kingdom was again reduced to division, discord, and impotence. Leszek's unsuccessful foreign policy, too, failed to maintain Polish influence in the outlying provinces in the East.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile a new and dangerous element had been introduced into the young Polish State. The existence of the Prussians, still a pagan and barbarous tribe, on the northern borders, had long been a source of anxiety and danger to the Polish princes; and in 1225 Duke Conrad of Masovia invited the Order of Teutonic Knights to settle in the province of Kulm or Chelmno (approximating to modern East Prussia) and to repel their savage incursions.

The Teutonic Knights were an Order originally founded in 1191 by the Pope for the protection of the pilgrims to Jerusalem. They wore a black coat and a white cloak with a black cross; and for weapon bore a large, plain-hilted sword. Their bed was of straw, and their diet originally only bread and water. Each candidate took an oath on entrance as to his German blood, his gentle birth, and his acceptance of the law of strict celibacy. The Order had no sooner been confirmed by papal authority than forty Germans of noble families joined. The Teutonic Knights later assimilated the Sword-bearers of Livonia, and finally developed into the Prussian monarchy that was later to become such a sworn enemy of the Polish Republic.

Bitterly as Conrad was subsequently blamed by Polish historians for the introduction of this alien and dangerous factor into the country, this prince had really to choose between such a dependence and extermination, for alone and un-

aided he could not hope long to bear the brunt of the Prussian raids. The Teutonic Order, which had just been expelled from Hungary by Andrew II., did not hesitate to accept his offer, and its new domicile and dominion in the North were definitely established by the treaty of Kruszwica in 1230, whereby the Knights were granted sole possession of the maritime district between Pomerania and Courland, and southwards as far as Thorn—a concession which, as it subsequently proved, practically deprived Poland of access to the Baltic. So far were the Poles from anticipating any danger from the Order, however, that during the period 1243–1255 they actually assisted it to overthrow the independent Pomeranian princes—then the most formidable of the Knights' opponents. On the pretence of converting the Prussians to Christianity the Teutonic Order seems to have endeavoured to exterminate them root and branch. Savage as these wild tribes were, they were outmatched in savagery by the Knights, who brought them a sword in the guise of a Cross; and the remnant that escaped their ruthless conquerors were forced to seek refuge in the remote natural fastnesses of their country, in the swamps and forests which were then and still are numerous there. Many towns and strongholds were built by the Order for the complete subjection of the country—among them those now known as Thorn (anciently Torun) Elbing, Heilsberg, etc.

The loss of Poland's suzerainty over Pomerania—due to the internal discord and diversion of the wars of succession—served to complete the chapter of accidents and misfortunes experienced during the reign of Leszek the White. The position and power of Cracow, as the seat and centre of Polish national life, had already declined, thus further decentralising and dividing the State. The great prelates of the Church, as we have seen, were independent of royal and civil authority; the great nobles, similarly unchecked, tended to

become rich and powerful at the expense of their weaker neighbours.

The death of Leszek in 1227, at the hand of Swiatopolk, a Pomeranian prince, served only to intensify the incessant internal struggles of the country. The competitors for the throne and province of Cracow were Conrad of Masovia and Henry the Bearded of Silesia, and a rivalry began which lasted four years, and ultimately ended (in 1231) in the triumph of Henry, a wise and prudent ruler. On the death of Wladislaw Longshanks, Henry inherited Greater Poland and thus became the most powerful prince in the country.

Henry the Bearded was succeeded in 1238 by his son Henry the Pious, who had hardly ascended the throne before the Tatars, having overwhelmed the resistance offered by the Russian princes, first appeared on the confines of Poland. In 1241 their terrible hordes, under their leader Batu, surged over all the country, sweeping it with sword and fire, and riding rough-shod over all resistance. The towns of Sandomir, Cracow, Wroclaw were sacked and burnt to the ground; and thousands of the inhabitants were put to the sword, the remainder seeking refuge in the mountains of Hungary or the forests of Moravia. Penetrating to Silesia, Batu overthrew the Polish princes at Liegnitz on April 9th, 1241, and here Henry the Pious, with nearly all his knights, fell on the battlefield. After burning all the Silesian towns, Batu invaded Hungary, where he routed King Bela IV. on the banks of the Sajo. But here his triumphs ended, and exhausted and diminished by the stubborn and successful resistance of the Moravians at Olmütz, the Tatars returned to their southern steppes, leaving behind them a smoking and desolate wilderness. A second and no less savage incursion occurred in 1259, in the course of which the principalities of Little Poland and Sandomir were systematically ravaged for the space of three months.

After the retreat of the Tatars the struggle for Cracow recommenced, to be terminated only by the accession of Boleslaw the Modest, of whose comparatively long reign (1243–1279) the only significant feature was the increasing power of the clergy in political as well as religious affairs. The terrible afflictions through which the country had passed naturally produced their popular reaction in the direction of piety and purity of life, and it is interesting to note that in all the history of the Polish Church no period is so rich in saints as this. In this period, too, the parcelling and partition of the country had attained their climax, almost their limit. Almost every province in Poland had become divided and sub-divided among petty princes and princelings. That of Cracow alone remained one and indivisible; but as we have seen, its power had been severely shaken by the incessant struggles for its throne—which the lengthy reign of Boleslaw the Modest merely interrupted.

This turbulent time now saw the first appearance in Polish history of the burgher-class and townsfolk. In earlier days, as we have already seen, the countryside was peopled and the soil tilled by captives taken in war. During the intervening period of internal strife, however, this class had not only not been increased (owing to the absence of successful wars) but had actually been considerably depleted by the continual civil wars and internecine struggles in the State. This depopulation was naturally only increased as the result of the Tatar invasion; and with the consequently lessened production of the country the princes and rulers found their resources becoming painfully meagre. A remedy was accordingly sought in colonisation. Seizing the excuse and opportunity afforded by the lawlessness which obtained in Germany after the death of Friedrich II. (Hohenstaufen) the Polish princes encouraged the immigration of German settlers into Poland, granting them lands, autonomy, protection, and

other special privileges. The first German colonies were thus established in Silesia, and subsequent to the Tatar invasions they extended all over Poland. The estates of both clergy and nobility were colonised in this manner; and thus the foundations were laid of a number of free cities in Poland with a population which, almost entirely German in origin, formed the custom of referring to the jurisdiction of their native country in all matters affecting their own well-being. At the same time, too, a number of self-governing colonies or communes were established on the land.

Leszek the Black (1279–1288) who succeeded Boleslaw on the throne of Cracow, was principally aided in his struggle with rival princes by the newly-established and powerful burghers of that city, and with their support and that of Hungary he ruled at Cracow till his death—except for a brief interruption during a third Tatar invasion in 1287, when he was obliged to seek refuge in Hungary. A new rivalry for the possession of Cracow now arose between Henry (surnamed Probus) of Wroclaw, the most powerful of the contemporary Silesian princes, and a ruler who for his strong German sympathies was invited to Cracow by the burghers of that city; and Wladislaw Lokietek (the Dwarf) a brother of Leszek the Black. Lokietek—as this prince is commonly called in Poland—succeeded in repulsing the Silesian faction at the battle of Siewierz, and marched into Cracow. The burghers, however, secretly opened the gates of the city to the supporters of Henry, and Lokietek was forced to retire. Henry, who was the first ruler to be established on the throne of Cracow on the initiative and with the aid of the burghers themselves, died childless after a brief reign, and bequeathed the province to Premyslaw. This prince, however, failed to gain the approval of the burghers, and they chose in his stead Wenceslaus of Bohemia, who not

only expelled Premyslaw but also defeated Lokietek at the battle of Sieradz, compelling him to renounce his claim to Cracow and Sandomir and to do homage for his own possessions of Brzesc, Cuiavia, and Leczyca.

In the meantime the expelled Premyslaw, having acquired greater Poland and Pomerania by inheritance, had been crowned (in 1295) at Gniesno, with the Pope's permission, as King of Poland and Pomerania; and hoped thus to become a centre of gravity for the minor Polish princes and provinces. He had reigned only eight months, however, when he was murdered by the emissaries of Otto of Brandenburg, his rival for the throne of Pomerania. This act profited its instigator but little, nevertheless, for both Greater Poland and Pomerania were seized by the indomitable Lokietek, who thus became the most powerful prince in Poland, and might then have succeeded in wresting Cracow and Sandomir from Wenceslaus had it not been for the serious internal troubles that threatened to overwhelm him. As it happened, however, the great nobles, restive and unruly under his authority, obtained the aid of Wenceslaus (or Waclaw as he is called in Polish) and drove Lokietek from the throne. Waclaw was then crowned at Gniesno as King of Poland, and under his sceptre all the Polish provinces, with the exception of Masovia and Silesia, were again united—not for many centuries to be rent asunder.

Waclaw was responsible for the creation of a new order or dignity—that of the *starostas*, or lieutenants of the kingdom, in whom the judicial and executive power was invested.

. . . . . .

Availing himself of the external difficulties soon experienced by Waclaw—engaged in war with both Hungary and Germany—Wladislaw Lokietek entered Little Poland and with Hungarian aid successfully occupied a number of towns. He and his supporters were again outside the gates of Cracow

when Waclaw died, and Waclaw's son being subsequently murdered at Olomunec (Olmutz), Lokietek lost no time in making himself master of the principality of Cracow and Sandomir, in addition to his provinces of Brzesc, Cuiavia, Sieradz, and Leczyca.

The troubles of Lokietek were by no means over, however. He was still confronted by the hostility not only of the nobles of Greater Poland, but of the burghers of Cracow, who suspected him of anti-German sentiments. The difficulties thus arising prevented Lokietek from holding Pomerania, which was lost in this manner. In response to the appeal from an insubordinate Pomeranian family named Schwentz, Waldemar of Brandenburg had besieged the town of Gdansk, but retired before the troops of the Teutonic Knights, to whom Lokietek had addressed a plea for help. The knights, however, proved a more dangerous enemy than Waldemar, for no sooner had they driven the latter from before the gates of Gdansk than they treacherously slaughtered the Polish garrison, and seized the city and the whole province of Pomerania.

Lokietek was powerless to prevent this act, having his hands full at the time with a burghers' revolt in Cracow, under the leadership of Albert, the *Wojt* or bailiff of the city, the bishop Muskata of Cracow, and the abbot of Miechow. Ultimately, however, this rising was suppressed, and Lokietek punished the burghers by withdrawing certain of their privileges and ordering their municipal registers to be written in the Polish instead of the German tongue. On the death of Henry of Glogow, prince of Greater Poland, this province passed completely into Lokietek's possession, notwithstanding the opposition of the burghers of Poznan. In 1319, with the consent of the Pope, Wladislaw Lokietek was crowned at Cracow king of all Poland—a title henceforth borne by each of his successors.

Preparations were now begun for the recovery of Pomerania

—which the Teutonic Order still held in defiance of a papal decree. Wladislaw accordingly strengthened his position by alliances with Hungary and Lithuania. The former he effected by marrying his daughter Elizabeth to Charles Robert, King of Hungary; the latter by the union (in 1325) of his son Casimir with the daughter of Gedymin, founder of the Lithuanian State. In the year 1331 Lokietek assembled at Chęciny a great Diet of princes, barons, prelates and knights to discuss the military measures to be taken against the Teutonic Knights, who, however, anticipated them by boldly invading Greater Poland. At the battle of Plowce (1331) the knights were definitely defeated, leaving large numbers of slain; but the Order yet escaped extermination. Two years later Wladislaw Lokietek died, leaving the kingdom to his son Casimir III. afterwards called the Great.

CHAPTER VII

CASIMIR THE GREAT AND THE UNION WITH LITHUANIA

CASIMIR III. (1333–1370) was the first great Polish statesman—in the modern sense of that word. Though he shunned or evaded no inevitable war, he was a friend of peace, and his reign was a series of political alliances and treaties. In the very teeth of all the forces of discord and disruption, a reunion of the kingdom had lately been effected; and it was vitally important to the welfare of the nation that so united it should remain. Any projects for the internal reorganisation of the country, the rebuilding of her ruined towns and villages, the recommencement of trade and agriculture—demanded at the outset some kind of security against civil or foreign wars.

Casimir accordingly entered upon a series of astute political bargainings. By the final cession of Silesia, in treaties signed in 1335 and 1355, he secured the withdrawal of certain Bohemian pretenders' claims to the Polish crown. In spite of his father's death-bed injunction Casimir did not attack the Teutonic Knights; partly because, for the reasons given above, he did not want war then; partly because war at any time with the Knights was a difficult and dangerous matter, powerfully supported as they were by the Emperor. Instead he endeavoured to arrange the dispute without recourse to the arbitrament of arms. A tribunal was assembled to discuss the matter, and it decreed that the territories of Pomerania, Cuiavia and Dobrzyn must be surrendered by

the Order. The latter, however, refused to accept this judgment and lodged an appeal, in the meantime holding firmly to the lands in dispute. Finally, under the treaty signed at Kalisz in 1343, and ratified by the Polish nobles and burghers, it was agreed that the knights should retain Pomerania, but restore Cuiavia and Dobrzyn to Poland.

Casimir now directed his attention and energy to the conquest of Red Russia—in which design he found himself confronted with the competition of Lithuania, which State also claimed rights in this province. In the end Casimir was victor, and several long wars culminated in a treaty, signed in 1366, by which the Western part of Volhynia was incorporated in Poland. About the same time the province of Podolia was also subdued and compelled to acknowledge Polish suzerainty.

The force that fused the old elements and the new into one composite State was of course the Latin culture and religion. The principles of Catholicism were zealously carried, by the Dominican and Franciscan monks, into the newly-acquired territories. Catholic bishoprics and an archbishopric (at Halicz) were established, though the Eastern Church already existing there was in nowise interfered with, and enjoyed equal rights with the newcomer. A yet closer bond of intimacy was created by the numbers of Polish settlers who were attracted to these lands by the king's offer of local autonomy and other privileges. In the maturing of these designs of expansion towards the East, Casimir came gradually to relinquish the idea of attempting to recover Pomerania and Silesia.

In the meantime the internal condition of the country had occupied his attention. Tendencies toward separation had to be met and overcome, lawlessness checked, and order and organisation, based on positive, undeviating, and national laws, firmly established. The all-important, the fundamental

necessity, of course, was that of just law and jurisdiction; and the foundations of these were laid at a famous Diet of bishops, palatines, castellans, and magistrates convoked by Casimir at Wislica, in the year 1347. The so-called Code or Statute of Wislica, which constitutes the first monument of Polish jurisprudence, first fixed and elaborated the unwritten laws and customs of the country, and is divided into two parts: (1) that dealing with Little Poland, which was actually enacted at Wislica; and (2) that dealing with Greater Poland, which was subsequently enacted at a separate Diet at Piotrkow. The statute contained a number of enactments relieving the lot of the peasant (whose unhappy condition at this period will be discussed in a subsequent chapter). The two sections were combined into one Code in 1368.

Casimir also set himself to weaken the influence of the German burghers and colonists in Poland, and to break their bonds of intimacy with their country of origin. This he effected by the establishment of Polish Courts of jurisdiction and the abolition of the settlers' custom of appealing to the German High Court at Magdeburg. Further influences at work to the same end were those of intermarriage and the influx of Polish artisans into the towns. Considerable improvements were made, too, in the status and condition of the Jews. In 1334 was enacted the famous Statute which freed them from all civil and commercial disabilities; and this was followed in 1357 by another statute called *privilegia Judæorum*. In this connection there is a story, which has gained some credence though denied by the historian Caro, to the effect that the favour shown by Casimir for the Jews arose out of his affection for a Jewess named Esther—a tale recalling a famous Biblical episode. However this may be, the fact remains that from this monarch's reign dates the important influence exercised by the Jews in the social and economic life of Poland.

The peasants and serfs (*adscripti, servi, glebæ*) were afforded protection from the most crying evils afflicting them by the better administration of law and justice; some of them managed to share the autonomy and other privileges already referred to in connection with the German colonies; and the colonisation of Ruthenia or East Galicia provided others with opportunities denied to them in their native provinces. So highly, indeed, did the contemporary and succeeding generations of peasants hold this monarch, in virtue of the reforms he instituted on their behalf, that he was generally called the Peasants' King (*Krol Chlopkow*).

Possessed of large personal property in land, Casimir was from the beginning of his reign not only king in name and fact, but also the richest and most powerful prince in Poland; and the royal revenue was practically independent of taxes voted by the Diet. Thus he was able, in a manner and measure denied to his predecessors, considerably to raise the power and prestige of the throne. The general lawlessness and predatory habits of the nobility, the insubordination and defiance of the clergy, Casimir firmly repressed. Conceiving law and justice to be the only stable basis of society, he exerted himself to establish them, and to establish himself as their steward and champion. To this end he created a new administrative force representing the royal authority. He constituted his most eminent officers as a real Ministry, sitting frequently to discuss the weal of the realm; while in the provinces the *starostas* and under them the *burgraves* administered the new laws. To encourage the study of law, Casimir founded, in the year 1364, an Academy at Cracow with this as its chief object. This was, after that of Prague, the second Academy or University to be founded in Central Europe.

The restoration of law and order and the partial subjection of the nobility, however, were not achieved without friction.

The nobles of Greater Poland, restive at royal interference with their prerogatives of disorder and pillage, rose in rebellion in 1352 under the leadership of Macko Borkowicz, *wojewoda* of Poznan. Nevertheless Borkowicz was captured by the King's men and thrust in prison, where he subsequently died of starvation. When Casimir overrode the clergy's claim of exemption and privilege, and resolutely levied taxes on the lands of the Church, the bishop of Cracow, Bodzanta, excommunicated him (though another but less trustworthy story is that this step was taken, all other remonstrances having failed, as a protest against the King's personal licentiousness). Baryczka, the unfortunate priest who bore the writ of excommunication to Casimir, however, was thrust into a dungeon and during the night thrown into the Vistula.

The fruits of the vigorous social policy pursued by Casimir were soon seen. The general security, the rigorous justice, the moderate taxation, the construction and improvement of roads and bridges—all encouraged industry and prosperity. Agriculture flourished again, and the new and outlying territories acquired were soon covered with small farms. Though the existence of the Teutonic Order prevented Polish access to the Baltic itself, Poland was traversed by the great trade routes from Asia into Europe and from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and in consequence such towns as Cracow, Poznan, Lwow (Lemberg), Sandomir and Lublin became the centres of great international markets and fairs. Trade, handicrafts, and industry were carefully fostered by the King, who established new markets and granted new concessions to the merchants. Everywhere new towns sprang up whose sole obligation, in acknowledgment of the privileges and protection bestowed by the monarch, was that of raising a fixed number of armed men in the emergency of war; and churches, castles and fortresses were built—stone at this period replacing wooden dwellings. Increasing attention, too, was paid to education,

and numbers of schools were founded in this reign. Polish students journeyed to Paris, Prague, and Bologna to study at the universities there. As was usual in Western Europe in this era, the whole literature of Poland—comprising the legal codes, the decisions of the courts, the chronicles of the historians and the lyrics and ballads of the minstrels—was written in Latin. To sum up, the reign of Casimir the Great saw the dawn of the future splendour of Poland among the nations of Europe.

The court of Casimir was renowned in Central Europe for its luxury and ostentation. John of Czarnkow, the archdeacon of Gniesno, has left a faithful picture of the brilliant scenes witnessed at Cracow in December 1363, when the King, together with Duke Bolko of Schweidnitz, acted as umpire in a dispute between the Emperor Charles IV. and King Louis of Hungary. Charles consequently married Elizabeth, the granddaughter of Casimir, and his wedding festivities were celebrated at Cracow, when no less than an emperor, four kings and numerous princes and their trains filled this picturesque old Polish city.

In his own matrimonial alliances, however, Casimir appears to have been indiscreet, or at least unfortunate. His father Wladislaw had arranged his marriage with Anne Aldona, the daughter of Gedymin of Lithuania. When she died, without leaving male issue, Casimir contracted a marriage with Margaret, daughter of the blind King John of Bohemia, who fell at the battle of Creçy. Before the union was effected, however, she died—out of grief, it is said, at the approaching intimacy with a man whom she disliked. In 1341 Casimir married Adelaide of Hesse—a woman of so little personal attraction that the King soon banished her to the Castle of Jarnowiec, where she lived for fifteen years without seeing her husband's face. His third wife was Jadwiga of Glogow.

On the 3rd of November 1370, Casimir fell from his horse

while hunting near Cracow, and was killed. His tomb, which is of red-brown marble and faithfully portrays his appearance and features, appears among the other royal monuments in the fine cathedral of Cracow. In this his last rest in his capital city, scene of so many of his splendours and successes, the monarch is represented as lying under a baldachin or canopy, supported by pillars; he is draped in his royal mantle; his crowned head rests on a cushion; his hand holds the sceptre and the globe, and a lion is at his feet.

. . . . . .

Foreseeing the imminence of a fresh conflict between Poland and the Teutonic Knights, Casimir had planned to secure the aid and strong arm of Hungary, then a formidable power in Central and Eastern Europe. He purposed therefore —having himself no male heirs—to bequeath the throne of Poland to Louis of Hungary, and this was consequently arranged with the accord of the Polish nobility. The latter, however, as the price of their consent, exacted a number of concessions and privileges from the prospective ruler; and at the treaty signed by Louis and Casimir on 1339 in the death of the latter's first wife, Louis undertook to respect Polish laws and customs, not to introduce new taxation, and to appoint only native officials to the administrative posts of the realm. In 1355, at a subsequent congress at Buda, Louis further promised, in the event of his becoming King of Poland, to abolish all the taxes recently imposed on the clergy, the nobility and the burghers by Wladislaw Lokietek and even by Casimir the Great; to relinquish all claims to the shelter and hospitality of the clergy's and nobility's estates, on the occasion of his visits to Poland; and to reimburse to those undertaking them all the cost of military expeditions without the Polish frontiers. Only at this considerable sacrifice of the monarchical power in Poland did Louis attain the Polish throne.

After his accession in 1370 Louis, of whose vast empire Poland formed but a small part, continued to reside in Hungary and entrusted the government of Poland to his mother Elizabeth, a daughter of Wladislaw Lokietek. Louis held the throne in spite of all opposition mainly by the support of the nobles of Little Poland, whom he won by special concessions to oppose those of Greater Poland—a policy which naturally fostered the very separatist tendencies from whose hold Poland had been painfully struggling free. A further bribe was necessary to secure the kingdom to the female descendants of Louis—and this bribe was contained in a pact signed at Koszyce in 1374 in which the nobility were exempted from almost all duties and services to the State, and Louis pledged his bond never to restrict their prerogatives. This agreement of Koszyce, in which the nobles appeared for the first time in Polish history as a united body (hitherto all privileges had been granted to individuals and parties) was destined to have important consequences. By the extension of such wide privileges to the entire class of lords and nobles, the szlachta, or landed gentry, were suddenly elevated to a new and almost all-powerful authority in the affairs of the realm. Their exemption from tribute or taxation, and the consequent depletion of the royal treasuries, made the king dependant for monetary aid on their bounty and good-will. His impotence to tax them without their consent made it necessary for him to convoke assemblies—foundations of the future Parliament—at which to ask and obtain such consent, and at every assembly thus convoked, and for all revenue thus obtained, the *szlachta* never failed to extort further substantial privileges. The reduced sources of revenue rendered it impossible for a king to maintain an adequate standing army; and on occasions of emergency the monarch became obliged to resort to the levée en masse (*pospolite ruszenie*) or call of the nobility to arms, with the result,

of course, of still further establishing the nobility as the real rulers of the realm. The grave fact remains, therefore, that this pact of Koszyce rudely shattered the social equilibrium, the common prosperity, the sound system of law and justice introduced in the reign of Casimir the Great.

In spite of his many concessions to the Polish nobility, the arbitrary actions of Louis did not fail to provoke disaffection and revolt. In Cracow the mob fell upon and killed a number of officers and courtiers in the train of Elizabeth; in Greater Poland, the nobles rose in open insurrection. Two unjustifiable actions on the part of Louis had given them a sufficient incentive and excuse: the appointment of officers from Little Poland to posts in the larger province; and the violation of Polish integrity offered by his incorporation of Red Russia in the kingdom of Hungary (1378). The rising in Greater Poland had hardly begun, however, before Louis died (in 1382), and two years of interregnum followed, attended by all the internal strife and struggles for supremacy to which we have become accustomed in studying Polish history.

The most prominent figure among the contesting nobles, and the principal claimant to the throne, was the Duke Ziemowit of Masovia, the northernmost province of Poland, which had still managed to exist as an independent principality. Ziemowit proposed to marry the princess Jadwiga, a girl thirteen years of age, who as the daughter of Louis and the great-granddaughter of Wladislaw Lokietek had an equal right, by inheritance, to the thrones of both Hungary and Poland. By an agreement with the queen-mother of Hungary at Kassa in 1383, the Polish nobles, led by the Little Poland section, finally placed Jadwiga on the throne. Fear of approaching trouble with the Teutonic Knights induced them to seek protection in an alliance with Lithuania, which State was also menaced, and accordingly the girl queen, although already betrothed to Duke William of Austria, was

married to Jagiello, grand-duke of Lithuania, and the latter was crowned King of Poland at Cracow on March 4, 1386, under the title of Wladislaw II.

. . . . . .

The Lithuanian State, which extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and formed a great barrier between Poland and Russia, was only in part Lithuanian. Most of its territory and population were properly Ruthenian, and had merely been subdued and governed by the more warlike Lithuanians. Although subdued and practically enslaved, however, the Ruthenians, who constituted the civilised element in the State, had exercised a powerful influence on the religious beliefs and social customs and even the speech of their conquerors, with the result that the latter were gradually accepting the Ruthenian language and abandoning their paganism for the orthodoxy of their serfs.

The origin of the Lithuanians, or *Litwini* as the Poles call them, remains to this day an interesting but unfathomable mystery. They were first found inhabiting the forests and marshes of the Upper Niemen, and thanks to the superb natural defences of their country they were able to preserve their original savagery for a much longer period than any of their neighbours. This savagery, together with their indomitable hardihood and valour, made them a people formidable to all in their proximity. The Russians, themselves notable warriors, are said to have fled at the sight of them "like hares before hunters." The Livs and Letts fell victims to their ruthlessness as "sheep are the prey of wolves." German chroniclers unite in calling them the most terrible of all the barbarians.

Their first entrance into recorded history followed the settlement of the Teutonic Knights to the north of Poland. The terrible fate suffered by the wild Prussians at the hands of this Order roused the Lithuanians to a sense of their own

danger and forced them to combine in their own defence. It was at this time, therefore, that they abandoned their communal habits of life for the safer, if less free monarchical system of government. Happily the urgent need of the hour called for and created a series of successive rulers, who were certainly great in their own day and way.

Among them must be mentioned Mendovg (1240–1263) who, for reasons of State policy, accepted the Christian faith, countered the encroachment of the Teutonic Knights by cleverly asking and obtaining the protection of the Pope, and annexed the principality of Plock to his extensive domains, which already included Black Russia; and, a greater prince still, Gedymin (1315–1342) who introduced Western civilisation and foreign traders into the country, built towns and tolerated all religions—a notable advance in that age. Gedymin further added Kieff, Chernigoff, and other Russian duchies to Lithuania.

The union of Poland and Lithuania as separate States under Wladislaw Jagiello had been achieved by their mutual fear of the Teutonic Knights. After the death of Gedymin in 1345 his son Olgierd had been placed on the throne of Lithuania, and this prince, together with his brother Kiejstut, still further enlarged the Lithuanian territories—mainly by inroads on Muscovy and the Tatar steppes. Kiejstut governed the Western part of the country, where he maintained the resistance against the encroaching Knights; while Olgierd was mainly occupied in the South-East, where he succeeded in forcing the Tatars to seek refuge in the Crimea. It was in this reign that the Southern borders of Lithuania touched the Black Sea, embracing all that tract of land between the mouths of the Bug and the Dnieper.

In 1377 Olgierd died and was succeeded by his son Jagiello, leaving Kiejstut in possession of Samogitia, Troki and Grodno. The Teutonic Order, however, managed to effect an estrange-

ment between uncle and nephew. On the 15th of August, 1382, the elder prince was assassinated at Krewo, by the order of Jagiello. The sequel was as the Knights had foreseen: three weeks later Jagiello was forced to cede Samogitia, as far as the banks of the Dubissa, to the Teutonic Order. The latter now attempted to set up Witowt, son of the murdered prince, against him, but Jagiello wisely forestalled a further division of the country by conciliating his cousin and restoring to him his father's territory. As a final measure of security against the designs of the Order, he effected the previously described marriage with Jadwiga of Poland and the consequent Union of the two States.

The Act of Horodlo, in which this notable Union of the two kingdoms was subsequently confirmed, was promulgated in 1413, and was itself hardly less noteworthy. Its preamble contained the following high invocation:—

"Nor can that endure which has not its foundation upon love. For love alone diminishes not, but shines with its own light, makes an end of discord, softens the fires of hate, restores peace in the world, brings together the sundered, redresses wrongs, aids all and injures none. And whoso invokes its aid shall find peace and safety and have no fear of future ill!"

. . . . . .

In view of the absence of reliable and really informative records of this period, it is difficult to form any adequate conception of the state of Poland during the first four centuries of her existence. One can but gain here and there a hasty glimpse of the political conditions of the country, of the gradual rise of the nobility, the gradual enslavement of the peasantry, and the decreasing power of the king. The one sure and unshakable fabric in the kingdom, in this as in a later period, seems to have been the Polish Church, whose beneficial influence cannot be over-estimated. During the disastrous partitional period, when every noble's hand was against his

fellow, when courts and castes were established in bewildering profusion everywhere in the country—the Church was the only factor of union and stability. To say nothing of the labours of the Cistercian monks as colonists and church-builders, or of the missions of the Dominicans and Franciscans, the frequent ecclesiastical synods, which represented, as no other institution could, the whole of Poland, maintained the national spirit and solidarity in these times of discord and division. Not a little of the development of the land and the political organisation of the country, moreover, owed its origin to the efforts of the Church. In the thirteenth century alone no less than forty-nine papal legates visited Poland, and thirty provincial synods were held by them to regulate ecclesiastic affairs and promote good government. To their eternal credit it must be said that the clergy consistently protected the lower against the tyranny and encroachments of the upper classes.

The growth of towns and civil institutions, of which a premature outcrop had appeared in the reign of Boleslaw the Brave, had suffered severely during the internal troubles. In the eleventh century Kruszwica, the old Polish capital, and Gniesno, the metropolitan see, had actually achieved some considerable importance, and had become prominent in the political life of the country; but in the following period of partition both cities were ruined, and the centre of national life was transferred from Great Poland to Little Poland, where Cracow, from the advantage of her position, soon became the seat of the monarchy and one of the most influential cities in Europe. By the end of the fourteenth century all the great trade guilds had been established there, and the cloth manufactured in the city was famous from Prague to Nijni Novgorod. At last Casimir the Great—so luxurious had the habits and so sumptuous the dwellings of its citizens become—thought it prudent or necessary to impose some restriction on the ex-



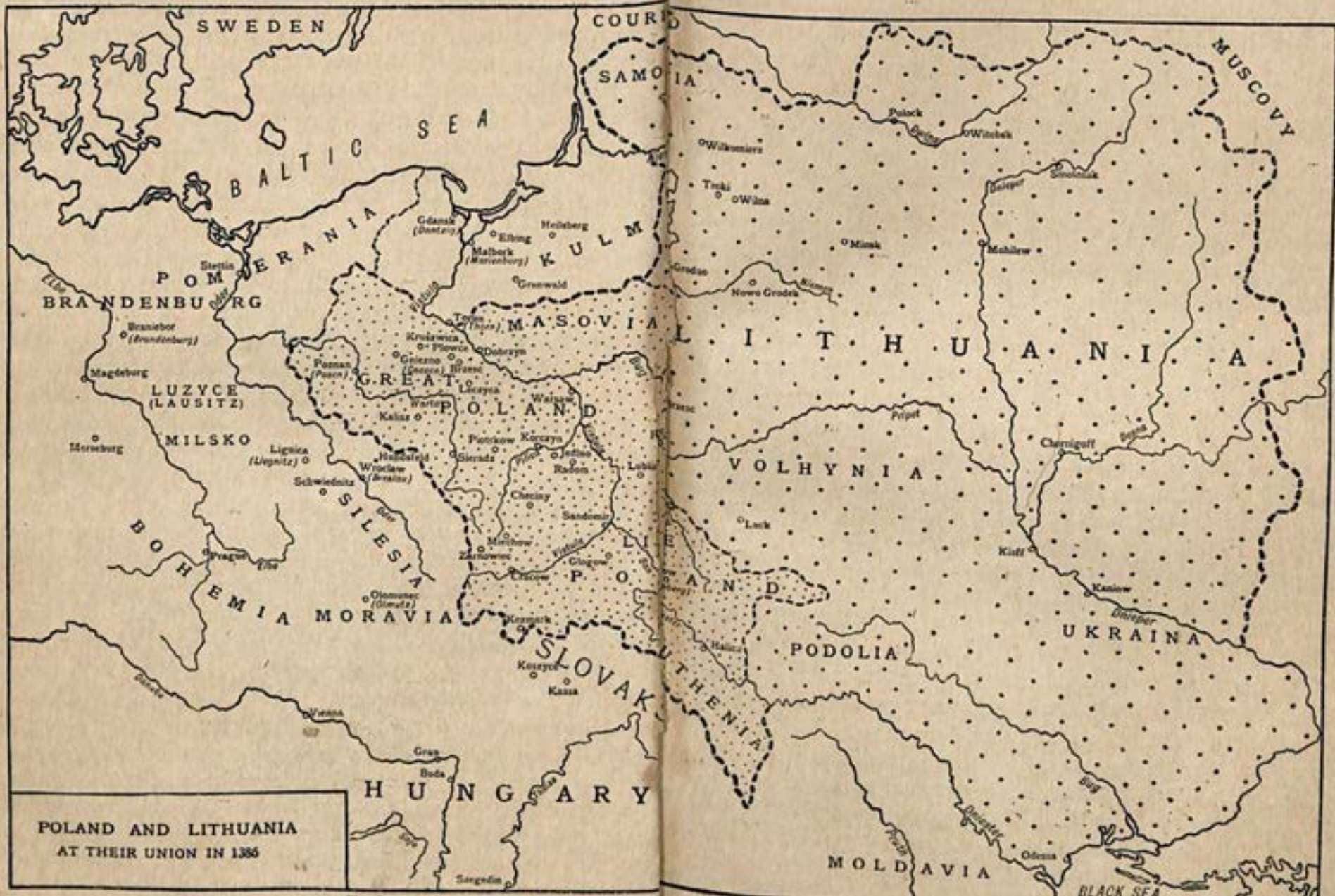
Casimir III., "The Great," King of Poland.

travagance of this city. By this time the Polish towns and burghers—as we have had occasion to remark in the history of the struggles of Wladislaw Lokietek for the throne of Cracow—attained a considerable degree of political influence, and their deputies sat with the nobles and clergy in the King's councils, a right formally conceded to them at Radom in March, 1384.

The leading feature of the political organisation of Poland in the thirteenth century was the almost universal recognition of the rights of local and provincial autonomy. This autonomy varied according to the nature of the concessions which, bestowed by the king unequally over the country, had divided the nation geographically into groups or castes, each enjoying a different degree of privilege and self-government. This group-organisation, as we shall observe later, endured to the end of Poland as an independent state. The following are the great orders or classes into which the population was divided :—

Great Nobles and Prelates.—During the anarchic period these enjoyed the preponderance in the government of the country, composing the *colloquium* convoked as the occasion arose by the reigning prince. This body, which subsequently became the Senate, or Upper House of the Polish Parliament, decided all questions of foreign policy and exercised legislative and judicial powers. No important measure could be promulgated without its consent.

The Szlachta, or Gentry.—This class was created chiefly by the disbanding, on the cessation of wars of conquest, of the armed forces in the military encampments and the garrisons in the fortified towns. According to their military rank the soldiers thus liberated were rewarded with hereditary estates in land, immunity from certain taxes and services, and the right of jurisdiction over their tenants and of levying taxes on them in the prince's stead. These privileges were



POLAND AND LITHUANIA
AT THEIR UNION IN 1386

called *jus militare*, and in return their possessors were obliged, at the king's summons, to muster a fixed force of armed men for the emergency of war. A class of minor gentry enjoying fewer privileges were called *scartabelli* or *Wolodyki*.

Burghers.—The rise to power and importance of the townsmen and merchants has already been described, together with the part they played on several occasions in the making and unmaking of Polish kings.

Serfs.—The greater part of these were settled on the land, which they cultivated and on which they raised the corn and kine and other products required of them as tax or tribute. They were obliged to perform personal services for the *szlachta*, their masters, and enjoyed practically no individual liberties. With the weakening of the monarchy and the growing concessions to the *szlachta* they gradually lost the protection of the Crown and became mere chattel-slaves.

Free Peasants.—These had no personal duties or obligations to their landlords, and only paid rent and taxes in respect of their holdings in land. By the end of the thirteenth century, however, they had passed, together with the serfs, under the immediate jurisdiction of the *szlachta*; and their lot grew gradually worse, and their liberties fewer.

There was another class of peasants who lived under German law. These were immigrants from Germany who had founded or settled in Polish villages and had been granted local autonomy and temporary immunity from taxation. Any Polish noble, with the permission of his sovereign, might invite German colonists to settle in this manner on untilled lands within his jurisdiction; and such colonists generally retained their German laws and customs, with the right of appeal to the German Court at Magdeburg.

Jews.—In consequence of the persecution to which they

were subject at the time of the Crusades, a very large number of Jews had left Germany and settled in Poland, with the goodwill and even the patronage of the reigning prince. Their occupation was almost entirely that of trade and usury.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST JAGIELLO

THE accession of Jagiello to the throne of Poland and the consequent union of the two countries was not effected without a further notable recognition of the political power of the nobles. On his marriage with Jadwiga the new King signed a charter at Nowe Miasto Kozczyn which confirmed and developed the terms of the Treaty of Koszyce and in virtue of which Act the military strongholds and administrative posts in Poland passed into the exclusive control of the nobility. This concession, naturally, prevented for ever any attempt at the establishment of a royal autocracy in Poland. Further the royal judges were removed from the criminal courts; and the King confirmed the rescindment of the monarch's right to call upon the nobility to perform free military service abroad. Finally, all the territories and possessions of Lithuania were thenceforth united to the kingdom of Poland, and the subjects of that country were to subscribe to the Catholic faith.

The last-named pledge Jagiello—who in baptism into the Christian Church took the name and title of Wladislaw II.—achieved by measures partly pacific and partly coercive. For the most part the Lithuanians were found ready to yield to the persuasion of their own prince, more especially in consideration of the privileges and immunities with which his converts were rewarded, and also of the summary fate of two refractory barons or *boyars*. At

Wilna, the capital of Lithuania, Wladislaw founded a bishopric.

Subsequently Jagiello consigned the government of this country to the hands of his brother Skirgiello, and proceeded to Red Russia, for possession of which province his Queen and the nobles of Little Poland were contesting with Hungary. At Lwow (Lemberg) Jagiello received the homage of the Hospodar of Moldavia, who sought his protection against the encroachments of Hungary. This voluntary submission on the part of the Moldavian prince thus extended Polish influence to the shores of the Black Sea.

As he had begun, Jagiello continued his policy of conciliation towards the Polish nobility. Honours and offices were lavishly distributed among them; and to the nobles of Little Poland in particular, being indebted to them for his crown, he made grants of extensive territories in Little Russia or Ruthenia. The consequent colonisation of this region—due principally to the large members of Polish immigrants who settled there, building towns and villages, and introducing new methods of agriculture—gradually brought the Ruthenians into the ever-widening world of Latin civilisation.

The union of Poland and Lithuania and the latter's acceptance of Christianity definitely destroyed the ostensible mission of the Teutonic Knights. Originally established on the Baltic shores for the express purpose of taming and converting the savage natives of that region, the Order had now lost almost all its religious character and had become a ruthless and formidable military outpost of Germany, occupying the territory between Pomerania and the Niemen and thus excluding the western Slavs from the sea. But although the coronation of Jagiello as the Christian King Wladislaw II. put an end to their existence as a mission *in partibus*, the Teutonic Order as a powerful military organisation still menaced the security of the joint kingdoms. In the arts of war as in the arts of

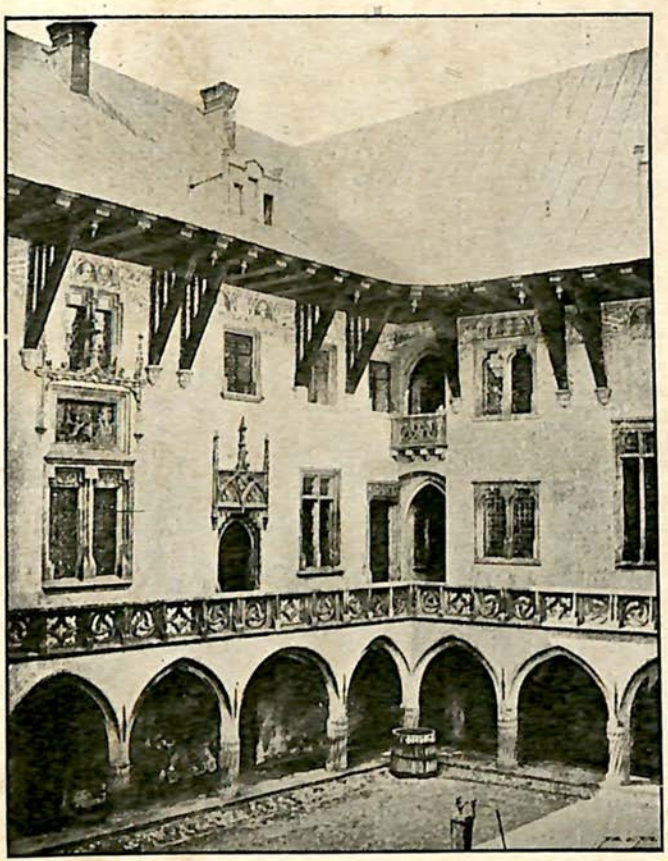
diplomacy the Knights incomparably had the advantage. Their ranks were recruited from the most polished feudal chivalry of Europe; their treasure-chest seemed inexhaustible; their wits were sharpened by long experience of political bargaining. It was no wonder, then, that for the twenty years following the Union the Teutonic Knights more than held their own.

Their first opportunity for attacking the foundations of the Union was afforded by the jealousies of the two States, emphasised by the personal enmity between Jagiello and his cousin Witowt or Witold, with whom the Order had more than once intrigued to their own advantage. Witold was induced to foment rebellion in Lithuania, and as a result of civil strife which made of Lithuania a smoking shambles and gave the province of Zmudz or Samogitia, the original seat of the Lithuanians, into the hands of the Knights, Jagiello consented to depose Skirgiello and invest the government of Lithuania in the insurgent Witold. By the compact of Wilna, of January 18, 1401, confirmed at Radom on the following March 10, the Grand Duchy was accordingly surrendered to Witold on the understanding that the two States should have a common policy, that on the death of Witold Lithuania should revert to Jagiello, and that subsequently no new ruler of the joint kingdom should be chosen without the concurrence of both nations.

In the meantime, Witold, who aspired to royalty and independence, had planned the conquest of Moscow and the overthrow of the Tatars who overran the southern plains of Russia. He actually subdued Smolensk and compelled the allegiance of the republics of Novgorod and Pskoff, but his ambitions were finally shattered at Vorskla (1399) where he suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Tatars. The campaign, ill-conceived and ill-fated as it was, had the happy result, however, of bringing Lithuania and Poland



Monument to King Wladislaw Jagiello in Cracow.



Courtyard of the Old University Building, Cracow.

again into interdependence and union; and the Teutonic Knights, abandoned by their ally Sigismund of Luxemburg, King of Hungary, who had opposed Poland over the loss of Red Russia but was induced to sue for peace at the imminence of a conflict between Hungary and the Turks, were glad to come to terms at Raciaz in 1404. By this treaty the territory of Dobrzyn was restored to Poland in exchange for a certain sum of money.

Nevertheless a decisive war was still imminent, and the struggle was precipitated by Witold's eager efforts to recover the province of Zmudz thus lost through his ambition. On July 15, 1410, the Polish forces led by Jagiello, together with a great army of Lithuanians, Ruthenians, and Tatars under Witold, and a number of Bohemians under Zizka, gave battle to the Teutonic Order at Grünwald (in Polish *Zielone Pole*) near Tannenberg in Prussia, and won a great victory. Ulrich von Jungingen, the Grand Master of the Order, was slain with a host of his knights.

But though the menace of the Order was definitely destroyed by this defeat, Jagiello was prevented, by the withdrawal of Witold and his army from the field, from reaping the full fruits of the victory. Even his second success over the Knights, won single-handed at Kozanowo, did not avail him against the city of Malbork, their capital and chief stronghold. The year following his victory at Grünwald Jagiello—threatened in the south by Sigismund of Luxemburg, who had added the Empire of Germany to his already extensive Hungarian territories, and whose army had now entered Little Poland—made peace with the knights at Thorn. By this treaty the disputed province of Zmudz was surrendered to Poland, and a considerable indemnity paid by the Order.

In one of these campaigns against the Order, it is interesting to remark, no less a person than Henry Bolingbroke, after-

wards Henry IV. of England, took an active part. Chaucer, it may be remembered, says of his knight—

> "Ful ofte time he had the bord bygonne
> Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce;
> In Lettowe hadde he reysed and in Ruce."

Jagiello's own rudely-scrawled messages to his wife and to the Bishop of Posen, written on the day after the victory at Grünwald, are still preserved.

. . . . . .

The immediate results of the last successful campaign were manifested in the Act of Horodlo (October 2, 1413), which, as we have seen, consummated and finally confirmed the union of Poland and Lithuania. Both countries were organised on the same basis, the administrative system of Poland being extended to the sister country; Palatines and Castellans, as in Poland, were appointed at Wilna and Troki; and those Lithuanian nobles who accepted Catholicism were admitted to the privileges enjoyed by their Polish peers. It was even decided, if necessary, to hold parallel national assemblies at Lublin and at Parczew. All the chief offices of State were consequently duplicated: for instance, the *hetman wielki koronny* (Grand Hetman of the Crown) as the Polish Commander-in-chief was called, had his counterpart in Lithuania, who bore the title of *wielki hetman litewski* (Grand Hetman of Lithuania), and so on. Thus began the process of uniting and equalising the internal life and organisation of the two countries.

Possessed of the idea of strengthening Lithuania by the means of a common religion, Witold converted pagan Zmudz to the Catholic faith, founding a bishopric at Miedniki. In order to free the Ruthenian Orthodox Church from dependence upon Moscow—a subjection that naturally had reacted politically in favour of Muscovite domination in

Ruthenia, Witold summoned a Synod of the Orthodox Clergy at Nowogrodek, where it was decided in future to recognise only the authority of the Metropolitan of Kieff and the Patriarch of Constantinople (or Tsarograd, as it was called in Russia). Witold even dreamt of a union of the Greek and Latin Churches in Lithuania, and to this end despatched Gregory Zemblak, the new Metropolitan of Kieff, with nineteen suffragan bishops to the Council of Constance.

During the remainder of the reign of Wladislaw Jagiello the Teutonic Knights frequently gave trouble. Unable to become reconciled to the loss of Zmudz, they forced several small wars on Poland, and only definitely relinquished all claim to the contested territory in a treaty signed at the Lake of Melno in 1422. Thereafter their hostility to Poland was confined to diplomatic intrigues at the Papal Court at Rome.

The first fruit of this diplomatic warfare was a conspiracy between the Knights and the Emperor Sigismund to detach Lithuania from Poland as an independent kingdom. Though this plan almost succeeded, and though Jagiello unwillingly consented thereto at a meeting at Luck (1429), the bitter opposition of the Polish nobility and the death of Witold himself caused its failure. Notwithstanding the harshness of the picture the historian Æneas Sylvius has left us of this Lithuanian prince, Witold seems honestly worthy of the title "Great," as warrior and as statesman. From the darkness which obscures the more personal and intimate side of his life no particular instance is evident of the cruelty ascribed to him; though he certainly did not shrink from acts of treachery when the occasion arose. For his period he appears to have been a fairly accomplished linguist, speaking not only Lithuanian, Russian, and German, but probably also Polish and Latin.

Witold was succeeded by Swidrigiello, who also attempted,

with the support of the Emperor Sigismund and the Hospodar of Moldavia, to free the Grand Duchy of dependence upon Poland. His ambitions ended unfortunately for him, however, for in 1432 he was deprived of his lands and dignity and replaced by Sigismund, the brother of Witold. The disaffection among the Ruthenian population of Lithuania was subsequently overcome by the Act of Grodno, which placed the Ruthenian and the Polish nobility on an equal footing and recognised the equal rights and liberties of Polish or Lithuanian Catholics and Orthodox Ruthenians. A later treaty, signed at Troki not long before the death of Jagiello, further defined the power and position of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, who were to hold their title by the consent and at the pleasure of the Kings of Poland and to renounce all claim to the provinces of Volhynia and Podolia. The Teutonic Knights made only one more attempt at the detachment of Lithuania from Poland, and after suffering defeat at the battle of Wilkomierz, pledged themselves, in an agreement signed at Brzesc Kujawski in 1435, never again to intervene in the relations between the two countries.

. . . . . .

Wladislaw II. died at Lwow in 1434, at the ripe age of eighty-three, and was succeeded by his son of the same name. His Queen Jadwiga, a woman of beauty and spirit, held in great affection by her subjects, had predeceased him in 1399; and Jagiello married three times after her death. His second wife was Anna; his third Elizabeth, a widow; and the fourth Sophia, a princess of Kieff. Although he had strictly forfeited the Crown of Poland on the death of his first wife, in whose right he held it, his reign had been so successful and the Union of the two countries so ardently desired that the Poles unhesitatingly confirmed and continued him in his position.

Jagiello seems to have been a man of kindly, if rough

manners, and of inconsiderable stature. A faithful and graphic portrait of him is afforded by his monument in the Cathedral of Cracow. During his long reign of forty-nine years Poland had slowly but certainly won her place among the leading States of Europe, a triumph almost entirely due to the statesman-like qualities, the foresight and sagacity and untiring patience of Jagiello.

In this period Poland met and passed the turning-point in her history. Her triumphs over the Teutonic Knights and their ally the Emperor had not been without their due effect on the nationalities then under German domination. And these in turn, in their endeavours to free themselves of dependence on Germany, looked to Poland for succour and support; as a kind of racial centre and rallying-point of the Western Slavs. Jagiello had at first encouraged the Hussite or revolutionary party in Bohemia; in return Hussites had fought on the Polish side at Grünwald. These relations with Bohemia indirectly afforded the Polish nobles occasion for disputes with the clergy, who at this period, by reason of the recent conversion of Lithuania and Zmudz, enjoyed their greatest influence. Deep discontent was manifested at the many temporal privileges claimed by the Church, like the right of jurisdiction in some cases over laymen, the receipt of certain tithes, etc. Also the bishops had an undue preponderance in the Senate, to the disadvantage of the more numerous nobility; and in the hands of the Senate, Jagiello, who was unenlightened on many internal questions, proved but a docile and easily-influenced monarch. The mediæval spirit, in Poland as elsewhere, manifested itself in the sources of education of that day. The University of Cracow, revived in 1400 by the aid of a grant from the Queen Jadwiga, became one of the chief strongholds of catholicism in the country.

Meanwhile Jagiello, at the instigation of the powerful ecclesiastic Zbigniew Olesnicki—a Polish parallel to our own

Wolsey, and a figure particularly prominent in the subsequent reign—had refused the crown of Bohemia when offered him by the revolutionary Hussites. He took this attitude partly from fear of offending the Church, which was naturally hostile to the heretic Hussites, partly from fear of the Emperor Sigismund, to whom Bohemia owed vassalage. However this may have been, the refusal definitely shattered Polish and Bohemian hopes of a union of the Western Slavs, a strong Empire between Germany and Russia.

In 1421 Witold of Lithuania, to whom the Bohemian crown had been offered in turn, actually sent Sigismund Korybut as emissary to Bohemia, but later, at a meeting between the Emperor, Jagiello, and himself at Kezmark, he agreed to recall Korybut and refuse the offer. In return the Emperor Sigismund promised to withdraw his support of the Teutonic Knights. Subsequently Sigismund succeeded in obtaining the crown, though his treacherous seizure of the heretic John Huss at the Council of Constance provoked a sanguinary insurrection in Bohemia that repaid him dearly for the reformer's death. In 1424 a further blow at the progress of Hussitism in Poland (directly proceeding from the presence of a large number of Polish students at the University of Prague, then the source and centre of the new doctrines) was aimed by the Edict of Wielmi, which ordered all the Poles in Bohemia to return to Poland, and enacted that those suspected of heresy should be tried by the Church.

The reign of Jagiello had seen a further series of triumphs for the nobility. Since the pact of Koczyce the Diets convoked by the King for the confirmation of new taxes had become customary. In 1404, after the holding of a number of provincial Diets, the first general council of nobles, assembled at Nowe Miasto Kozczyn, had resolved to levy a tax amounting to 12 groschen per *lau* of land (as much as one man can plough in a year) for the recovery of the province of Dobrzyn. In

1406 and 1407, independently and without the participation of the King, the nobles met at Piotrkow and took measures to protect their interests against the encroachments of the clergy. In reply to the Synodal statute of Mikolaj Traba (1420) the nobles prohibited laymen from applying to or accepting the jurisdiction of the Church.

At this period local Parliaments or Diets began to be formed. These, composed generally of nobles and gentry, became centres of provincial government, and not only levied new taxes but appointed tax-gatherers responsible directly to the diet. The gradual rise of these institutions in power and responsibility naturally weakened the central government of the country, menacing and undermining not only the monarchy but the great lay and ecclesiastic leaders and princes. The crowning triumph of the nobility was secured in 1422, at Czerwinsk, on the eve of battle with the Teutonic Knights. Here Jagiello conceded to the nobles the eagerly-sought protection of hereditary possessions from confiscation without previous judicial trial. Further, he renounced the royal prerogative of issuing new money without the consent of the prelates and princes; and pledged himself to maintain the laws instituted by Casimir the Great. In 1430, as the price of the nobles' acceptance of Jagiello's son Wladislaw as his successor, a charter was granted at Yeolno and confirmed at Cracow in 1433 warranting the liberty and inviolability of the individual (*Neminem captivabimus nisi jure victum*). These concessions, recognising for the first time in Polish history the security of person and property alike, became the most precious prerogatives of the Polish nobilty.

CHAPTER IX

THE DESCENDANTS OF JAGIELLO

At the death of Wladislaw II. the first Jagiello, his heir of the same name was a child of nine, but his right to be elected king does not appear to have been disputed by the Polish nobles of the period. The country was governed by the Queen and a council of senators for some years; and the actual reign of Wladislaw belongs rather to the history of Hungary than to that of Poland. After emerging from his period of tutelage, Wladislaw became involved in the affairs of the former kingdom owing to his friendship with John of Hunyad. At this time Albert II. of Germany, who was also King of Bohemia and Hungary, died leaving no heir to the throne, though his widow Elizabeth was expectant of a posthumous child. John of Hunyad, and the powerful body of Hungarian nobles who supported him, feared the prospect of a long regency during the minority of the heir—should the child prove a male—and contrived the election of Wladislaw to the throne, the customary condition of his marriage to the former queen being imposed. To this Elizabeth agreed, but when a boy-child was born to her, she withdrew her consent and set up her son, who was christened Ladislaus Postumus, as a claimant to the crown.

With a powerful body of nobles she withdrew to Stuhlweissenburg, where the boy was crowned King by the Archbishop of Gran. A disastrous civil war ensued, and the Pope, who was anxious to initiate a crusade against the Turks, sent

Cardinal Julian Cesarini to Hungary to conciliate the opposing parties. A meeting between Wladislaw and Elizabeth took place in 1422, and a peace was made, the terms of which have never been disclosed. It is generally assumed that they arranged to marry, but the death of Elizabeth followed very quickly—the cause has been often ascribed to poison—and Wladislaw was left in undisturbed possession of the throne

He now busied himself with the details of the crusade, which excited no interest outside Hungary. The expedition left Buda in July 1443; and after some heavy fighting was repulsed by the Turks at the pass of Slulu Derbend. Such heavy losses were suffered by the infidel, however, that the expeditious retirement into winter quarters was practically unopposed. So impressed was the Sultan Amurath with the fighting qualities of Wladislaw and his knights that he was glad to make peace. Wladislaw accordingly signed the Treaty of Szegedin, binding himself to keep the peace for ten years and accepting certain concessions. This treaty was made in June 1444.

Christendom was greatly moved at the success of the first operations against the formidable Turk; for the Hungarian force was only a small one, composed of but 30,000 men. From all quarters came messages encouraging Wladislaw to break the peace. The Pope absolved him from his pledge, and help was promised on every side. Only Poland, invariably and honourably averse to aggressive and unnecessary wars, advised and implored restraint. There was no valid excuse for the breach of faith, but Wladislaw had just arrived at manhood and his head was turned by the stir he had created. He set off on another expedition, and in November 1444 encountered the Turks at Varna. The Crusaders were practically exterminated, and Wladislaw and the Cardinal Julian both fell upon the field of battle.

. . . . . .

An interregnum of three years followed the death of Wladislaw III. This interval, met with fairly frequently in Polish history, was occasioned by several causes, the first being the unwillingness of the Senate to credit the account of the King's death, which only reached Warsaw some months after it actually occurred. Finally, couriers were sent to satisfy the Senators that the report was true; and having confirmed this, they offered the crown to Casimir, Grand Duke of Lithuania, and brother of the dead king. Casimir's first impulse was to refuse, and in this he was sustained by the advice of the Lithuanian nobles. The union of the two kingdoms was of too recent date to have promoted a perfect understanding, or settled the many differences, between Poland and Lithuania. The appointment of Casimir as Grand Duke had been designed as a concession to the pride of the Lithuanian nobles, and was welcomed by them as providing a special representative and champion of their interests and privileges. Naturally they did not look with any favour upon the proposal to elevate him to the throne; and under their influence Casimir declined the proffered honour.

The difficulty of obtaining a substitute, however, was not easily overcome, and when the interregnum had become inordinately prolonged, Casimir yielded to the entreaties of Queen Sophia, the widow of the first Jagiello, and accepted the crown. He announced his decision at a moment when the nobles of Poland had decided to offer the honour to Boleslaw, Duke of Masovia; and some irritation was displayed at his change of mind. His relation with the sister kingdoms was also prejudicial to him; for the Poles regarded him as unduly well disposed towards Lithuania, and the Lithuanians were convinced that their own country had a less share of his attention than Poland. It soon became necessary to placate both peoples, for Casimir was involved in the early years

of his reign in a long-protracted struggle with the Teutonic Knights.

The latter had degenerated into a drunken and licentious Order; their Grand Master, Conrad Wallenrod, only setting them an infamous example in profligacy. To hold them in check a counter organisation had been formed under the title of the Knights of the Lizard, but these finding themselves overmatched by the military power and prowess of the Teutons, now applied to Casimir for aid. He consulted his Senate, and promised assistance. But he had neither army nor money, and, to raise both, was forced to go to each of the local Diets of Poland in turn. There were five of these Diets, and each made and obtained its own demands before granting him money. Their suspicion of Casimir was so far justified in this, that he was prominently identified with Lithuanian interests, and preferred for many years to live at Wilna, the Lithuanian capital. The demands of the nobles upon the King were therefore based upon a very natural fear that their rights and privileges might suffer at the expense of their former enemies, the Lithuanians. Hence Casimir was forced to face a demand for confirmation of the ancient rights and privileges of the Polish nobles at each of the five *sejmiki* or local Diets. Three of these were held in Great Poland, one in Little Poland, and the fifth in Poznan, or Posen.

Particular importance was attached to the pledges he made at the Diet of Piotrkow, which were later exalted into the Statute of Nieszawa (1454), and held by the nobles as a sort of Magna Charta of their rights. They repaid the King with small money grants and with personal service; the latter, however, proving of no great value at first, for no headway was made against the Teutonic Knights. Casimir himself had still much to learn of the art of war, and his army dwindled away so sadly in the winter season—the Polish nobles could

not be induced to serve in the field during this period of the year—that the war dragged on for fourteen years. Eventually the knights were reduced to submission, and were glad to accept the terms of the Treaty of Thorn, made in 1466. This pact bound them to evacuate Western Prussia and to occupy Eastern Prussia as a fief of the Crown of Poland, the Grand Master of the Order doing homage as *Holdownik*, or vassal of the King of Poland. The historical importance of this need hardly be emphasised; for this fiefdom was the beginning of the kingdom of Prussia, and so of the German Empire of to-day. The right of homage was on a later occasion mortgaged by Wladislaw Wasa, and was finally wrested from King Augustus by the Grand Elector of Brandenberg in 1666.

Poland gained all Pomerania, and a number of important cities, including Thorn and Dantzig. The access to the Baltic and the possession of so excellent a port as Dantzig were most important acquisitions. Poland then comprised most of the best wheat-growing land of Central Europe, but until now had enjoyed no outlet for the export of the grain. Henceforth the Poles began to pay more attention to wheat growing for export, and found ready markets in Western Europe. Landowning became a privilege which the nobles, as the only landowners, naturally desired to monopolise. This desire and the increased demand for agricultural labour, had a most vital effect upon social conditions and legislature in Poland, as shall presently appear. The wealth of the nobles gave them a new interest in the government of the country, and they began to watch jealously over their rights and privileges at the local Diets or *sejmiki*. They established the custom of being represented by deputies (*posly*) at these assemblies, when personal attendance was inconvenient or impossible; and their common class interests facilitated their domination of the diets.

Casimir married Elizabeth of Austria, who became known as the Mother of the Jagiellos, for she bore him six sons, and seven daughters. The eldest of these, Wladislaw, Casimir established as King of Bohemia and Hungary. Three other sons succeeded him on the throne of Poland; a fifth became cardinal; and a sixth was subsequently canonised as a Saint. Of the daughters, one married John of Sweden, and founded the Wasa line of kings of Poland. In 1492 Casimir IV. died at Troski and his son John Albert was elected King of of Poland in his place. This election caused a wider difference with Lithuania than before. The Lithuanians also held an election, and determined to choose for their own King, Alexander, Grand Duke of Lithuania, and brother of John Albert. Throughout his reign the Lithuanians maintained their contention of a separate kingdom.

. . . . . .

John Albert was a warrior at heart. His interests were largely centred upon an expedition against Stephen, the Hospodar of Moldavia. He found that, as usual, no money was available, and that the nobles were only prepared to concede personal service in return for extensions of their privileges. Their first step was to obtain a revival of the *sejm* or general Diet of Poland. This first met at Piotrkow in 1493, the year following John I.'s ascension to the throne. There he signed a new Constitution of twenty-four articles, prominent among which was one exempting the *szlachta* from paying tolls on their imports and exports. This involved practically the whole trade of the country, since each noble was his own merchant and there was little commerce otherwise. Another article was designed to prevent the encroachment of burghers on the landowning privilege, and established the law that no extra-mural estates were to be held by this class. This restriction was confirmed in a more drastic shape at the next Diet, held in 1496.

By dint of such concessions, John Albert gathered a force of 80,000 for his expedition against Moldavia, which resulted, however, in disaster. The remainder of his reign is wrapped in some obscurity. There appear to have been complaints of the influence exercised over him by his adviser and former tutor, the Italian Buonacorsi; though Bain, in his able work "Slavonic Europe," holds that the King's popularity and influence increased rather than diminished in the latter years of his reign, in spite of the failure of his military ambitions. John I. died of apoplexy in 1501, and the breach with Lithuania was partly healed by electing Alexander to the throne of the joint kingdoms. It was further established that henceforth the king of Poland should be, *ipso facto*, Grand Duke of Lithuania.

In the latter capacity, Alexander had been engaged in a dispute with the Muscovite Czar Ivan, who defeated him at the battle of Wiedrosza. Ivan claimed the title and privilege of "Gosudar of all Russia," which was stoutly contested by most of the Russians themselves. The influence subsequently exercised by Muscovy upon the history of Poland renders it necessary at this juncture to give some account of this Grand Duchy, and of its position in Eastern Europe. Muscovy was located in the centre of what is now European Russia; to the North of the Grand Duchy was the Republic of Great Novgorod; and still farther North, the Republic of Pskoff. Around it were several principalities, including those of Tver, Rostoff, and Ryazan, all dominated in the time of King Alexander by Muscovy. The steppes of the South were still in the hands of masterless Tatars, whom the principle of natural selection drove farther and farther West in their raids. With Muscovy these Tatars were inclined and destined to make common cause.

The Western boundary of Muscovy was Lithuania, mainly inhabited by the same branch of the Slavonic race as the

Muscovites themselves. It is interesting, in these days of the contested rights of nationalities, to consider how many Russians were at this period under Polish rule. The inhabitants of Red Russia, Little Russia, and White Russia at least, were of the same race and faith as the Muscovites; and the incessant contention between these two dominant powers —Muscovy and Poland—had its root in a sentiment more deep-seated than the mere ambition of a dynasty, or the territorial aggression of the stronger over the weak.

Ivan III., the able and ambitious Czar of Muscovy, had soon brought the outlying principalities under his sceptre. His attempt to establish supremacy over Great Novgorod, eventually successful, had already brought him into collision with King Casimir, whose army, under the leadership of the warlike John Albert, defeated the Muscovites at Loposzlyna in 1487, and diverted the enemy from his designs on Lithuania. The quarrel was revived during Alexander's reign as Grand Duke of Lithuania, but was settled, for the time at least, by the marriage of Alexander to Ivan's daughter Elena.

One condition of this union was that Elena should be left free to practise the orthodox faith, and to this Alexander consented readily enough. A Greek Church was built for her at Wilna, the capital of Lithuania, and but for the interference of the Pope, the excellent intentions with which Alexander contracted the marriage might have been fulfilled. Elena's mother was Sophia Paleologa, and both she and the Czar Ivan seem to have desired, for political reasons, that their daughter should provide the subject for a religious dispute. There appears to have been an excellent understanding between Alexander and his Queen; and the interference with her religious freedom was never more than nominal. But it was tortured by Ivan into a cause of quarrel, and

involved the King in a war with Muscovy which his parsimonious Diets, and his own extravagant habits, prevented him from prosecuting.

Alexander inherited an estate sadly reduced and burdened by the liberality and ambition of John Albert. His poverty and his easy nature made him the plaything of his Senate and his nobles. The political history of his reign is one of concession after concession, wrung from him in return for mere pittances, or granted in the hope of funds which were not supplied. His first Diet demanded his signature to *pacta conventa* limiting his right to distribute offices, and depriving him of the control of the Regalia and the Royal Mint. Senators were also exempted from prosecution in the King's courts. He signed these Articles of Mielnik, as they were called, and found they were only a prelude to the Constitution of 1504, which established a Council of twenty-four Senators for his guidance. These were to serve in rotas of six, for six months at a time. By the same act he was deprived of the right of mortgaging the royal estates, except with the consent of the Senate, given during the sitting for the *sejm* or Diet. It was further provided that the Grand Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor must not be appointed except with the consent of the Senate during the sitting of the *sejm*.

In the following year, at the Diet of Radom, was enacted the Statute of *Nihil Novi* for the further safeguard of the privileges of the nobles. It provided that the King should not alter the Constitution, or enact any new Statute, except with the consent of the Senate and the *sejm*. At the same Diet was propounded and accepted the guiding principle of Polish polity, that all legislation must represent, not the will of a majority, but the unanimous wish of the Diet. On this principle was afterwards based the right of exercising the veto. A century and a half later all legislative action in

Poland was to be stultified by the exercise of this privilege of *Liberum veto*.

Alexander died in 1506, leaving to his brother Sigismund a legacy of debt, and a number of undecided quarrels, with others looming on the horizon. He was probably the least capable of the line of the Jagiellos.

CHAPTER X

THE RISE OF THE NOBILITY

It will be convenient—indeed it is necessary—here to examine the changes brought about in the social and political conditions of Poland by the continual encroachments of the noble class upon the rights and liberties of the remainder of the nation. Their own privileges, we have seen, they safeguarded from a possibly aggressive monarch by the Statute of Nieszawa in 1454. The king it was their prerogative to elect was in very fact nothing but their own leader and mouthpiece. His functions were jealously restricted to the appointment of officials of State, the distribution of the revenues from the State domains, and the administration of justice.

The elective system of monarchy was common enough in Northern and Eastern Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but its inconvenience, and the dynastic claims of strong royal families, caused it to die out elsewhere at the very time when the Poles began to attach the utmost importance to its preservation. Their sentiment on this subject was due in the first place, perhaps, to the manner in which the ancient enmity between Poland and Lithuania had been extinguished, and to the knowledge that the ruling family of the Jagiellos was bound, by birth and sympathy, to the interests of Lithuania. That fact will at least serve to explain the emphasis laid upon their elective privileges while the descendants of Jagiello occupied the throne.

The Poles of noble extraction constituted, at the outside,

less than five per cent. of the population of Poland. In the latter half of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth, by combining on terms of unexampled equality, they contrived to exclude the other ninety-five per cent. of Poles from all share in the government of the country, to make the freemen of the countryside nothing better than serfs, and to deprive the burghers of everything but some poor municipal rights. Their attack on the freedom of the peasants began in the reign of Casimir IV., and was the direct consequence of the war upon the Teutonic Knights. The result of that war, it will be remembered, was to give Poland, among other things, possession of the Baltic port of Dantzig. The acquisition of this new outlet for Polish agricultural products, and the demand for them in Western Europe, caused an agricultural revival in Poland. The richest wheatlands of Central Europe were held by the Polish gentry, and the most accessible timber areas by those of Lithuania. With a good and convenient channel of export, trade grew by leaps and bounds, and unprecedented prosperity filled the pockets of a community hitherto primitive and simple in its tastes.

Naturally, more and more land was cultivated and put under crops; and naturally, the demand for agricultural labour grew in proportion. Thereupon the nobles sought to secure the servitude of formerly free peasants by force of coercion and fraud. No justification, legal or moral, could be found for the contention they raised that the Polish peasant was the property of the landlord, or by any other means or manner tied to the soil, except in virtue of his occupation of it. Indeed, the history of the peasant in Poland exactly inverts that of other countries at the same period. While elsewhere in Europe the peasant was freeing himself from the impositions of villeinage, in Poland he found himself becoming more and more deeply sunk in their bondage. Towards the

end of his reign Casimir consented to a legal enactment making it an offence to harbour a fugitive serf. His successor, John Albert, went a great deal farther in the direction of binding the peasants to the soil. Of a family of peasant children, only one might leave the estate where he was born and go to the cities; to another estate none might go. And an only child was forbidden to leave the land, but must pass into the serfdom of its parents. The right to own land was sedulously denied to persons of plebeian birth, and consequently Poland was denied forever the stubborn strength of a yeomanry growing gradually, as in England, from century to century.

Although the nobles were the sole landowning class, not all the nobles were landowners. Many of them lived in dependence on the estate of a fellow noble, with no other income than that which might accrue to a soldier of fortune in a warlike age. But neither wealth not poverty affected the equality of condition among the nobility; all were equal in a democracy of nobles which has had no parallel in the history of the world. Their trading privileges they guarded as jealously as their rights to the soil. A law exempting the whole class from toll on either exports or imports had the effect that might have been expected. It hampered commerce in Poland to the extent of killing it altogether. The noble who could import and export free of duty was his own merchant. No trader who paid duties could expect to compete with him. Customers among the peasants could not be found; they had no money to spend and no goods to sell; and indeed nothing in the world but a barren and meagre existence. Eventually there were no merchants in the community of the noble class. The latter had decided that trade was dishonourable and a disqualification; the noble who indulged in it lost his nobility by the act.

No special effort is required of the imagination to grasp the consequences of such restrictions upon trade. One of them

might be seen at the port of Dantzig, where for two hundred years foreign traders of every nationality swarmed, profiting by the commercial inexperience of the Polish gentry. Every outgoing cargo of wheat and timber meant big profits for some Swedish or English merchant. Every incoming vessel brought commodities which had been bought at ridiculous prices for Polish consumption. The trading profits went out of the country, instead of being retained to build up permanent manufacturing industries. To the very end of her national existence, Poland remained an undeveloped country. Other nations profited by the wealth and the luxurious habits of her nobles; only the most primitive manufactures ever sprang up in her great cities. Her imports always greatly exceeded her exports in value, and the bulk of the population eked out a wretchedly poor and primitive existence. The wealth derived from the land and the forests was spent by the nobles on luxurious living and ostentatious display. Nowhere in the world could there be seen more sumptuous apparel and more elaborate appointments and retinues than at the great Diets assembled at Warsaw for the purpose of electing a Polish king. Even the penniless nobles contrived a great deal of expensive elegance in dress, for each of them possessed a vote; and when, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the monarchs of Europe came to Warsaw to outbid one another for the crown of the kingdom, a vote was always worth the price of a rich cloak and a gold chain.

The privileges of the city burghers were clipped as closely as those of the peasants. In course of time the privilege of owning extrà-mural land was denied them, and in the reigns of Sigismund the First and Second, a movement was inaugurated which finally deprived the cities of representation in the Diets, both local and general. A law of the reign of John Albert forbade any burgher or peasant to hold any high office in the Church, and in the same reign a peasant was

permanently disqualified from holding land. In Poland the king was the source and sword of Justice, and the royal courts were maintained that equal justice might be dealt to all men. The peasant, however, was deprived of access to these courts by a statute of the reign of John Albert, which made all peasants subject to a tribunal composed of their own masters. Therein lay the absolute denial of justice to the peasants as a class, and from that statute dates their decline into the most abject serfdom.

The final wrong done to the burghers was to bring them also into legal subjection to the nobles. The case of an armourer of Cracow is preserved as an illustration. This man had made a suit of armour for a noble named Tenczynski, who proffered him but one-fourth of his charge for the service. In the dispute that followed Tenczynski drew his sword and slew the unfortunate tradesman. The exasperated burghers of the city took the law into their own hands, and pressed the pursuit of the noble so hotly that he took sanctuary. But that did not avail him, for they slew him in the sacred building itself; or they were charged with doing so by his fellow-nobles. The burghers so charged were tried—not in the royal court, as they claimed was their right, but in a court where they were judged by nobles, who ordered three of them to be hanged and three others imprisoned for life. Sigismund the First was constrained to consent to this course, though it was an abrogation of his own prerogative as chief judge of the realm.

. . . . . .

This constraint upon the kings of Poland was exercised by the Polish nobles in virtue of the hold they possessed upon the purse-strings of the country. The revenues of Poland were derived from export and import duties, from which the nobles, who were practically the only importers and exporters, contrived exemption. There were also taxes

upon land, from which the clergy, who were important land-owners, were exempt. A hearth tax was another source of State income, but at no time was the revenue of the State in any way adequate to meet the demands made upon it. As a consequence, the king who wished, or was forced, to prosecute a foreign war, found himself dependant not only upon the personal service of the nobles, who constituted the army of Poland, but upon their goodwill for money with which to carry it on. This they only granted at the price of some encroachment upon the royal prerogatives, or on the rights and privileges of his humbler subjects. Another alternative offered itself to the monarch; this was to approach a single wealthy noble, or a family or group of wealthy nobles, for the money which was so parsimoniously doled out by the Diets. This latter course was not infrequently taken, with the inevitable result that there grew out of the noble class an order of great nobles who were rewarded by appointments as Senators, and even such high state offices as Chancellorships. But, as shall presently be seen, even the will of the *pans*, or great nobles, shattered itself against the extraordinary strength and unity that existed among the *szlachta*, or great body of the nobility.

These were not only all-powerful in Poland, they were Poland itself. Each one of them, landless squire or landed noble, could say and did demonstrate: *L'état, c'est moi!* To them came in turn king, magnates, clerics, Jews, merchants—everybody, in the bitter words of a Polish writer, with any favour to beg or any pretensions to political position, bare-headed and bribe in hand to solicit the good graces of the many thousand autocrats who constituted the Polish aristocracy. This body, continues the same critic, had all the vices of a crowd. It was impulsive, lacking in large vision, incapable of comprehending the national needs, egoistic, partisan, driven incessantly to social and even intellectual

distraction, easily deceived by splendid but unrealisable dreams.

And the tragic fact remains that until the kingdom of Poland was ultimately extinguished, every other consideration was subordinated to the interests of this class, and the amazing privileges they conserved with such tenacious unanimity and such jealous care.

CHAPTER XI

THE LAST OF THE JAGIELLOS

SIGISMUND I. was forty years of age when he came to the throne. A tall, soldierly man, he had spent his early manhood in administering the affairs of the unimportant Polish Duchy of Glogow. Ten days after his brother's death, in 1506, he was elected Grand Duke of Lithuania, and in 1507 was crowned King of Poland at Cracow. Notwithstanding the deep disorder in which his extravagant brothers had left the finances of the kingdom, Sigismund courageously began his reign by an attempt at reform. He enlisted the aid of some of the bankers of Cracow, and, among other things, actually derived a profit from the Mint.

The situation of Poland, however, effectually prevented any king from paying too exclusive attention to internal affairs. Sigismund was soon confronted with a source of grave danger and disloyalty in Lithuania. The trouble lay in the personality and ambition of Michael Glinski, a wealthy and influential noble who had been a loyal servant of Alexander and had served this King so well that he had been granted possession of half the territory of Livonia, where he now commanded a strong following.

Recognising the danger, Sigismund took an opportunity of depriving Ivan Glinski, the brother of Michael, of an appointment which had been provided for him, and so forced from Michael a demonstration of his disloyalty. The result was that Glinski, in hot anger, betook himself to the Court

of Vasily III., the Czar of Muscovy, and for the next ten years furnished a fruitful subject of complications with that monarch. In 1511 the Czar provided a force which enabled Glinski to lay siege to Smolensk, but the fortress held out, and was eventually relieved. Another siege followed in 1513, but the Muscovites were again thrown back. The third siege in 1514 was successful, and Sigismund lost this important fortress. In the open field, however, the Poles were superior, and a decisive battle at Orsza in 1514 gave them such an advantage that the Czar was glad to discuss terms of peace. The territory in dispute, besides the fortress of Smolensk, was the inheritance of St Wladimir—Polock, Kieff, and other towns—and the Czar claimed them all as Grand Duke of all the Russias. The war dragged on, therefore, till 1522, when a five-year truce was arranged.

At this period Sigismund found himself in urgent need of a free hand, for the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights was attempting to throw off the homage which, under the terms of the treaty of Thorn, he owed to Poland for Prussia. Poland had now incurred the suspicion and distrust of Austria, for Sigismund had married Barbara Zapolya, daughter of the most powerful magnate in Hungary, and the Emperor feared that he aspired to the Hungarian Crown. Thus the Grand Master received Austrian support, and Sigismund was forced to resort to diplomatic measures of defence. He conciliated Austria by two alliances. His son was married to the Archduchess Elizabeth, and he himself, having lost his Hungarian Queen, wedded Bona Sforza, daughter of the Austrian Duke of Mantua. He was able then to give the Emperor satisfactory assurances of his innocence of designs on Hungary. Having thus freed his hands in the south, Sigismund gathered men and money to deal with his rebellious vassal. In one fierce campaign he drove him over the Vistula, and in the following year broke his power so effectually that the Grand Master

Albert came humbly to Cracow and did homage in public in the market place. Having become converted to the reformed faith, however, and most of his Order with him, it was not as Grand Master, but as first Duke of Prussia, that Albert bent before his suzerain lord, King Sigismund of Poland.

. . . . . .

In Sigismund's reign Poland came first into actual conflict with the power of Turkey. Turkish conquests in Moldavia and the Crimea had made the boundaries of the two Powers coterminous, and Poland, after an interval of several hundred years, again knew the terrible experience of Tatar raids. In 1510 Sigismund sent out a force to repel one of these inroads, and defeated the raiders with great slaughter at Wiesnowiec. But usually the Tatars were so sudden and swift in their attack that they had withdrawn with their prisoners and plunder before the arrival of a punitive force. Thus in 1516 they effected a great raid into Poland and succeeded in carrying off 50,000 captives and immense booty unhindered. In 1519 they annihilated the force—inadequate enough—of 5000 Poles sent against them, and did immense damage. In 1527 they came almost to the walls of Cracow itself, but were routed at Kaniow, where 80,000 Polish captives were recovered. Their many successes, however, were sufficiently galling to Sigismund, who well knew that they might have been prevented, and knew how to prevent their repetition. His supreme difficulty was to move his Senate and Diet.

His scheme of defence was one eminently practical for a community like that of Poland, where the profession of arms was traditional and hereditary to some hundreds of thousands of nobles. He desired to divide the Kingdom into districts and circles, and to delegate to each circle the defence of the country for a certain period of the year. The plan was dis-

cussed with great interest both in the Senate and the Diet, and the former approved it highly. But the Senate represented the great landowners, the chief sufferers from these raids. The Diet represented the *szlachta*, the nobility upon whom would devolve the personal military service. In the end the scheme was rejected by the Diet.

A chain of strong frontier fortresses in the Ukraina, the border territory through which these incursions were made, would certainly have provided an efficient protection. An object lesson of the kind existed at Bar, where a fortress had been built which formed a nucleus of effective resistance to the raiders. There a flourishing community had arisen, and lived in some sort of immunity, the Tatars learning in time to avoid so dangerous a fighting centre. Other forts of the same kind might easily have been established, but for the parsimony of the Diets, and their tight hold upon the necessary money. Later, as shall be shown, the task of border defence largely devolved upon the Ukrainian Cossacks, who were alternately driven by the oppressiveness of the great Polish nobles into an alliance with the raiders.

Sigismund's struggles to procure money for necessary works of administration and defence were naturally hampered by exactions imposed by the Diets. At this period in Polish history the *szlachta* were chiefly concerned in limiting the rights and privileges of the burghers. There are several instances recorded of the exclusion of city representatives from the local diets. In Cracow itself a quarrel between a noble and a tradesman (already described in detail) was followed by a very grave miscarriage of justice in which Sigismund acquiesced. But, in his behalf, it must be said his difficulties with the ring of enemies around Poland were so acute that he was continually, and against his will, obliged to concede new privileges to the nobles, generally to the disadvantage of the rest of the nation.

Sigismund's Queen, the Mantuan Bona Sforza, furnishes one of the most picturesque figures in Polish history. She had great beauty and keen wit, and these gave her unexampled success as a woman; her masterful instincts, her proud spirit, her indomitable will compel her comparison to Elizabeth or Catherine as a great Queen. But besides these she had the evil genius, the greed, the unscrupulousness associated with the Italian noble-women of the period, and her reputation for these has obscured the meaning of her better qualities. In her own day scholars lauded her Latinity, poets praised her wit, and artists outrivalled each other in endeavouring to convey her rare beauty to canvas. It was due to her efforts that an afterglow of the Italian Renaissance illumined the Court of Poland, leaving traces of tender and graceful influences that may be discerned to this day.

The King himself was a generous patron of the arts, and the best architecture of Poland owes its existence to the interest he took in building, and the encouragement he showered on talented architects of all races. But now he was growing old, and his strength was waning. The last years of the kings of Poland were usually embittered by the question of the succession, and the doubt of securing the throne to their heirs. His own difficulty was enhanced by the hostility of the Queen to his only son. He was sorely tried, too, by the growing dissensions caused by the advocates of the reformed religion, against whom, as we shall see later, he thought it necessary to take extreme measures. He died at the age of eighty-one, on April 1, 1848; and his beautiful but rapacious Queen carried off her immense treasure of Polish gold to Italy, there to end her days. His long reign had resulted in much good for Poland. He had foiled the treasonable designs of Glinski in Lithuania, which might otherwise have divided the kingdom. He had secured the way to the Baltic and Dantzig in the face of opposition from Prussia. He had

ended for the time the enmity of Austria. And he had kept the ambitious Muscovite in check.

. . . . . .

His son, Sigismund II., had a personal battle to fight when he ascended the throne. He had secretly married Barbara Radziwill, daughter of the Lithuanian noble "Black" Radziwill, one of the wealthiest and largest landowners of the Grand Duchy, but a Calvinist whose zeal had turned to tyranny. Lithuania was a stronghold of the Greek Church, and Michael Radziwill was abhorred there for his religious views. The news of this match, announced by Sigismund to the Diet of Lithuania after his father's death, was received in respectful silence. The Lithuanians would not question any act of their Grand Duke, though they had their own unfavourable opinion of it. But the Poles were different. The Diet of 1548 called urgently upon the King to put away his wife; and this he stubbornly refused to do. In the painful scene that followed he reminded them that the word of a king had been given, and that he would not retract it. Two years later Barbara was crowned at Cracow by the Primate himself, who had been the very head and front of the opposition.

Shortly afterwards the long struggle for Livonia began. This Baltic province, which contained the important port of Riga, was held by the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sword. Its value as a training centre drew thither merchants from all the West; timber, grain, cattle, furs, and metal being the chief exports. The knights, like their Teutonic contemporaries, had long outlived the purpose for which the Order had been founded, and had degenerated into a simple band of robber barons. Their province was coveted by Muscovy and Sweden, as well as by Poland, but was easier of access to Poland than to either of the former. In 1556 Wilhelm von Fürstenburg, Grand Master of the Order, quarrelled with William of Brandenberg, Archbishop of

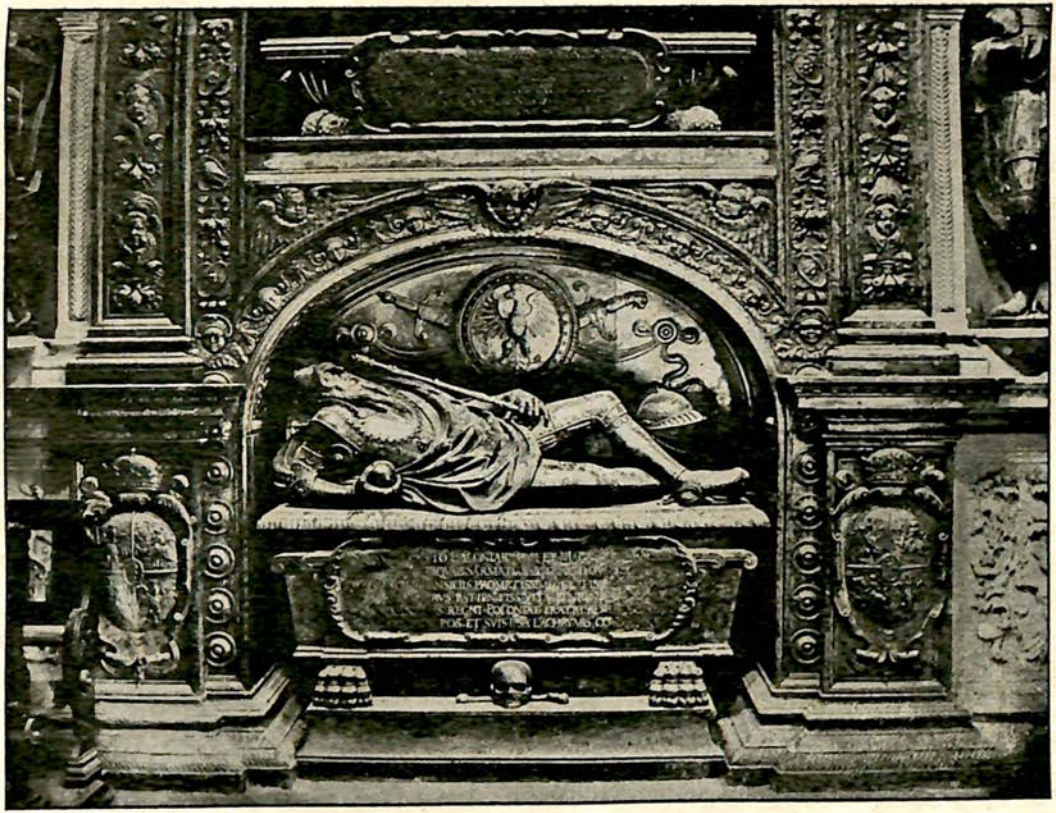
Riga, and the latter appealed for help to Poland. The King sent an embassy to von Fürstenberg, who detained the envoys, and eventually caused one of them to be put to death. This was good cause for dispute, and Sigismund sent an army of 80,000 men across the border into South Livonia. At the same time the knights of the Holy Sword had reason to fear the encroachments of Muscovy, and to escape these chose to make friends with the Poles.

An alliance was accordingly arrived at between the Order and Poland, and when Ivan of Muscovy invaded Livonia in 1558 he found himself resisted by the Poles as well as by the Knights of the Order. In the next year the new Grand Master, von Kettler, placed Livonia under the protection of Poland, ceding the provinces of Courland and Samogitia. This involved the Swedes as well, and in 1560 they invaded Esthonia, while Ivan devastated all Livonia. As Poland was now definitely committed to the defence of the country, it was incorporated in the kingdom, von Kettler taking the title of Duke of Courland in 1561. In the struggle which followed with Muscovy the constituent parts of the loosely-knit kingdom of Poland were drawn more closely together. The alliance with the Order was effected by Sigismund in his capacity as Grand Duke of Lithuania, the Polish Diet refusing to undertake the initial responsibility. When, however, the Muscovites invaded not only Livonia, but also Lithuania, both Poles and Lithuanians united in mutual defence.

At this time, moreover, death removed the principal anti-Polish influence in Lithuania, Black Michael Radziwill; and Sigismund enjoyed a greater influence there than any Polish king since his grandfather, Casimir IV. He induced the Lithuanians to send delegates to the Diet which met at Warsaw (1563–64), where terms of a real union between the sister nations were discussed. Five years later, at the Diet

of Lublin (1569), the actual union was accomplished. Lithuania was given the same laws, privileges, and government as Poland. It was arranged that the Diets should meet at Warsaw, in the territory of Masovia, which was then comparatively neutral ground, Masovia having only been incorporated with the kingdom in 1526 by the death of the last Grand Duke. The old independence of Lithuania was commemorated by the preservation of two offices—the Grand Hetman and the Vice-Hetman in the joint Senate. This master-stroke of policy was but one of the many consolidating acts of Sigismund II., the last of the Jagiellos. His wisdom, tact, and foresight, coming as a sequence to the prudent courage of his father, made Poland the chief power of Central and Eastern Europe.

It is curious, when estimating his achievements in the light of later history, to consider the opinion held of him by his own subjects, and by his contemporaries, at the time of his accession to the throne. He was brought up by his mother, the talented but corrupt Bona Sforza. He was educated by priests and women, and the chroniclers of the period do not hesitate to say that his mother had deliberately attempted the corruption of his youth, in order that he might be an instrument in her hands when he came to the throne. In appearance he was slight and effeminate, in strong contrast to his gigantic father, who to the end of his eighty years bore himself as a half-barbaric warrior king. His speech was soft and deliberate, concealing a tenacity of purpose that was first revealed to the great nobles of Poland in the contention which arose over his marriage with Barbara Radziwill. He had acquired the culture of the clever and witty women and the diplomatic priests with whom his youth was surrounded. His knowledge of men and his science of kingcraft extended beyond contemporary limits. Only such a king could have preserved Poland from the great religious wars that were then weaken-



Exclusive News Agency.

Monument to Sigismund Augustus in Cracow Cathedral.

ing every other power in Europe, and had indeed made a mere bloody shambles of most of the kingdoms west and south of Poland for nearly half a century past.

. . . . . .

The first signs of religious faction appeared in the reign of Sigismund I., though they had been foreseen and threatened nearly a century before. Thus in 1424 it was necessary to issue the edict of Wielun against the Hussites, five of whom were burned in the market place of Posen. But it was not until the reign of Sigismund the First that the Lutherans made their influence dangerously felt in Poland; and they came by way of Prussia. Education in Poland, controlled by the Church, had once been excellent, but had long remained at a standstill. The teaching at the University of Cracow, the chief educational establishment in the kingdom, was old-fashioned, pretentious, and inadequate. The clergy did not realise the accessibility of the new influences to the youth of the country. But in Prussia, where the preachers of the reformed faith had gained so strong a hold, there were new and good schools, and to these the sons of the Polish nobles flocked. The best and most enterprising young men of the nobility, therefore, were being educated in the reformed faith, and were returning and spreading their views in Poland. At Königsberg they set up a printing press, and flooded the country with pamphlets and with extracts from the Lutheran version of the Scriptures. At the same time the Calvinists had gained a hold in Lithuania, where the most influential man, after the departure of Michael Glinski, was the Calvinist noble Michael Radziwill. From the South also came a wave of reformed religion, spread by the Bohemian brothers, whose preachers invaded the kingdom of Poland in great numbers.

Sigismund the First was faced with dangers on all sides, and depended on the support of the Pope for the very existence of his kingdom. He was himself a staunch Catholic,

and the only other religion he was prepared to tolerate in Poland was that of the orthodox Greek Church, to which the bulk of his Lithuanian subjects adhered. He issued the most severe edicts against heresy in every shape and form, and infringements of these edicts were attended with rigorous penalties. There were frequent hangings of heretics, or dissidents as they came to be called, in the reign of Sigismund the First. But, as is usual with persecuted faiths, the reformed religion throve everywhere, and the younger Sigismund found on his accession that it threatened to involve Poland in the very welter of bloodshed that was overwhelming her neighbours to the west and south. He was personally involved in the religious differences by his marriage with Barbara Radziwill, and though he was himself a loyal Catholic, there seemed no clear path out of his difficulties. However, the strenuous foreign situation which his father had had to face, and which had abated only by reason of the first Sigismund's cool courage and skilful diplomacy, was not present to harass him. He had time and opportunity to settle the religious differences of the country, however difficult and delicate they were.

His policy seemed at first no policy at all. Until the clergy consented to crown his Queen, Sigismund temporised. He took no active measure to force their hands, and his mere inactivity finally overbore their opposition. Five days after his wife had been crowned by the Primate, the King issued a proclamation that he would preserve the unity of the Church by strictly enforcing the laws against heretics. Thus encouraged, the Churchmen took matters into their own hands and at once summoned dissidents to appear before the ecclesiastical courts. The effect of this step was probably calculated by the politic King. It aroused the whole body of the *szlachta* against the clerics. The Church had grown to a position of great wealth and influence in Poland, and enjoyed exceptional privileges. Its large holdings of land were free of taxation, and

the clergy themselves, of course, were exempt from the other public burden of military service. On the other hand, the bishops sat in the Senate, and took an important part in legislation. The view of the *szlachta* was that they neglected their responsibilities in regard to national education, as well as their even more important spiritual duties. In this view they were so far justified that the influence of Queen Bona had corrupted the clerics to a degree never before or afterwards recorded in the history of Poland, and some notorious evil-livers at that time held high office in the Church. The minor nobility, and especially the squires of Masovia, had profited by the opportunities for cheap and good education afforded in the reformed countries beyond the Polish borders. Some of them who possessed benefices had actually conferred them on preachers of the reformed faith. There were even cases of Catholics being deprived of their livings at the expense of dissident preachers. Thus there were two reasons for the opposition of the *szlachta* to the clergy—their undue privileges and the leaven of dissidence.

The Diet of Piotrkow in 1552 saw Catholic and dissident nobles united against the attempt to try members of the *szlachta* before ecclesiastical courts. The storm broke in a fierce attack upon the bishops, before which the clerics quailed. They were even glad to accept the proposal of the King that the question of the jurisdiction of the clerical courts should remain in abeyance for twelve months. This period he contrived to have extended, on one pretext or another, year after year, until the danger had passed.

The Church in Poland was now on its defence. Every diet brought strenuous demands for its cleansing, and these demands came from the most respected and cultivated of the Catholic nobles. Rome became alarmed, and sent its most talented sons as Nuncios to regenerate the Polish Church. The foremost of these, the Nuncio Berard, at once grasped

the weakness of the position of the Bishops. The former grievance of the nobles, that the Church did not bear its share of the responsibilities of landowning, was tactfully overcome by a levy on Church property; and all appearance of persecuting the dissidents was sedulously avoided. Meanwhile the dissidents, no longer united, as in other countries, under the common bonds of oppression, began to quarrel among themselves. The King addressed a reproof to them at the Diet of Piotrkow in 1559, because of their violence and the trouble caused by their disagreements. Deprived of the stimulus of opposition, the dissident movement in Poland became commonplace and uninteresting. Unencouraged by coercion or proscription, it simply assumed its due proportions in the country.

The political wisdom of Sigismund II. was revealed in one matter where personal inclination, and even the interests of his dynasty, were opposed to the claims of policy. Like Henry VIII. of England, he wished to be divorced, but for a better reason. When his wife Barbara died, he had married Catherine of Austria, who proved to be a confirmed invalid. The last of the Jagiellos was approaching middle age, and still there was no heir to the crown of Poland. Had he pressed his scheme for a divorce, and remarried, it is probable that Poland, like England, would have come under the ban of the Pope's excommunication. But he allowed himself to be persuaded by the Nuncio who succeeded Berard, the legate Commendone, and the contemplated divorce was abandoned.

The end of the ecclesiastical Courts came in 1562, when the King had to obtain money from the Diet of Piotrkow for his Muscovite war. He attended in the garb of a typical Masovian country squire, with a grey coat of frieze and all the other trappings of the rural gentry of Poland. As usual the Diet demanded concessions, and on this occasion the King paid their price by abolishing the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical

courts. Then, freed from the fear of clerical oppression, the Catholic nobles formed a party in the Diet. The policy of the King, and the wisdom of the representatives of the Holy See, had saved Poland from the bloodshed caused elsewhere by religious intolerance. In 1565 Sigismund introduced the Jesuits, who formed establishments at Pultusk, Posen, Wilna, and other places, and redeemed the Church from the reproach of neglect and education. The reproach of religious intolerance, if it lay anywhere, lay at the door of the dissidents themselves, who quite failed to settle their own differences; and when they applied for recognition, laid themselves open to the King's retort that when they had quite decided among themselves on the tenets of their faith, they might approach him again.

His toleration extended to the Jews, whom the Polish laws protected as in no other country of Europe save England. They became the chief merchants and traders, content to be deprived of their rights as citizens in the shelter they found, and in the protection given by a liberal country to their wealth.

Sigismund died when Poland was at the zenith of her power and prosperity. His desire to leave an heir behind him was shared by his subjects; and with the promise that any child of his would be made legitimate, he took to himself mistresses for the most worthy object that could be advanced for such irregular alliances. Too late death freed him from his infirm wife. "By God!" he shouted from his death-bed, "I will marry again." Soon afterwards the breath left his body. The last and best-loved of his favourites plundered his private treasury, and even his corpse, so effectually that some difficulty was experienced in procuring for him even a decent burial. So ended the great Jagiello line of Kings of Poland.

CHAPTER XII

THE CONSTITUTION OF POLAND

In a previous chapter have been traced the steps by which the noble class excluded the burghers from political life and reduced the peasants to hopeless serfdom. It is now necessary to explain how they exerted the powers of government which they thus monopolised; how they made of the principle of equality a fetish which paralysed all administrative effort; how they directed that principle against the King himself, and rendered ineffective the best efforts of the wisest rulers to lift them out of the state of anarchy into which the kingdom eventually drifted.

Originally Poland was governed by a *wiece* or council of nobles, over whom the king presided. Some of these nobles were landowners on a large scale, and maintained establishments that were in themselves small kingdoms. A great noble might have, attached to his household in some capacity or other, fifty or a hundred of the *petite noblesse*, men also of noble birth but dependent on the great lord. In other countries at the same period they would have owed him feudal allegiance; in Poland they were theoretically his political equals. They were not responsible to him in any way for their actions, but only to the State.

The nobles had made property in land a privilege appertaining to their class only. Every one of them wished above all things to exercise this privilege, and the consequent growth of a class of small landed gentry was as inevitable as the

circumstance that they should unite to retain their peculiar advantages. Another privilege they monopolised was that of bearing arms; they were the only defenders of the country. In the earlier days each great noble collected his band of adherents and went out to fight as a natural thing; but with the growth of a squirehood, it was not so easy to collect an army. The squires, the *szlachta*, would not go unquestioningly out to fight.

Every government must have a head or leader, and the original republic of nobles in Poland chose one of their number to act in that capacity, with the title of king. The anomalous title and position of this leader were defined, with much subtlety and adroitness, by the Bishop Piasecki, a chronicler contemporary with Sigismund III. and Wladislaw IV. "The King of Poland," he commented, "is in his public functions like the queen-bee, who merely furnishes honey to her subjects. He alone discharges all the many responsibilities of the Republic. So bountifully does he dispense of his treasure that in all his wide domains and among all the nations under his sceptre, there is no squire or soldier without his slave. The clerics receive rich abbeys from him, and all the royal authority is based on his power of purchasing by such means all who aspire to positions of dignity or wealth. . . . But the lives, the liberties, and the estates of the nobility are altogether removed from the King's reach or rule!"

The king's functions, as we have seen, were to appoint the State officials, to administer justice, and to distribute the revenue of the State. The officials were constituted in the following classes:—Bishops, to govern the Church; Palatines, to govern the provinces; Castellans, to command fortresses and royal cities; and Starostas, to administer justice in the towns. Having once made these appointments, the King could not revoke them; every official was appointed for life, or for the period of the King's reign.

The Wiece, or great Council, in time developed into the Senate, or Upper House of legislature, over which the king presided in person. It was composed of 135 members, namely, 2 archbishops, 15 bishops, 33 palatines, and 85 castellans. The king had also a Ministry of twelve members; namely, the Hetman or Field-marshal of Poland, the Hetman of Lithuania, the Grand Chancellors of Poland and Lithuania, four Chancellors, the Lord High Treasurer, and the Marshal of the Royal Household. These had seats in the Senate, but took no part in the discussions.

The growth of a Lower House of legislature was coincident with the assertion by the lesser gentry of their rights. They assembled first in local Diets, or Sejmiki, to which the burghers were also admitted. Soon the *szlachta* not only dominated these assemblies, but exalted them into meetings of national importance. When the nation was at war, the Sejmiki would consider the situation, and the *szlachta* would decide to fight or not to fight, as they pleased. Thus Casimir IV., when confronted by the power of the Teutonic Knights, was obliged to go from one Sejmiki to the other for men and money to carry on a war against the enemies of Poland. The *szlachta* made the functions of these assemblies so vital to the State that they merged into a general Diet, the deputies for which were selected by the Sejmiki. As the *szlachta* controlled the Sejmiki, no one not of noble birth was ever sent to the Sejm, or general Diet. At one Sejm, that which elected John Albert as King, the cities of Thorn, Cracow, Lwow, Dantzig, and Posen succeeded in being represented, but the *szlachta* were careful that it should not occur again. They further took steps, as has been shown, to exclude the cities from representation even on the local Diets.

The Sejm commenced its career in a very strong position; it controlled the national purse, and represented and controlled the army. Without money the King could not hire

soldiers, and had only the nobles to rely upon. The *szlachta* could refuse money and personal service in the same breath, and render the Kingdom impotent and defenceless. When John Albert, who was an extravagant soldier, asked for both money and men, we have seen how the *szlachta* exacted concessions from him in return for supplying these. At the Diet of Radom they exalted their theory of equality into a legislative principle. That is to say, they decided that no law should be passed unless it was ostensibly the expression of the unanimous wish of the Diet. This theory was opposed to that primitive if unfortunate principle of human nature that the strong can always enforce his will upon the weak. In the earliest times the inconvenient minority, by insisting too strenuously upon the theory of equality and the right of obtaining an unanimous decision, was likely to encounter personal violence which either changed its views, or caused their suppression. But in a more sophisticated era the minority in the Diet was able to exercise an enormous negative influence. The simple utterance of the phrase *nie poszwalam* ("I protest") not only put an end to further discussion of the subject that elicited the protest; it ended the session of the Diet. An entirely new Diet had to be elected before the legislative work of the country could be continued. This right of a small minority or even of a single member thus to prorogue a Diet was introduced at the assembly of 1652 by the deputy Sicinski at the instigation of Jan Radziwill, and was subsequently erected by the *szlachta* into a constitutional principle of Poland, and under the title of the *Liberum veto* contributed in a very marked degree to the decline and final extinction of the kingdom.

Another custom imparted into Polish constitutional procedure was the right of confederation, which may best be described as a legalisation of revolt. An instance will presently be given of an attempt made by Sigismund III. to reform the Polish Constitution, which was met by a Confederation

organised by one of his nobles named Zebrzydowski. This man, in company with his confederates, actually rose in arms against the King and the rest of the nation, and by this expedient defeated the wish of the majority and escaped punishment for his rebellion. Towards the end of the existence of Poland it was not unusual for a Diet to form itself into a Confederation to defeat the few malcontents who would otherwise have stultified its effectiveness and dissolved it by the application of the *Liberum veto*. The actual reform of the constitution was finally achieved by this means, though on this occasion a small minority promptly formed a counter Confederation against the main Confederation in order to assert their adherence to the old Constitution.

It is difficult to render a system so complicated, even chaotic, more comprehensible to the general reader. It must be remembered that the Polish Constitution was not a written one, but the result of the *szlachta's* translation of customs that were convenient to them into inalienable rights. At the period we have now reached in Polish history—the end of the dynastic line of the Jagiellos—the nobles had succeeded in monopolising the legislature of the country, in addition to the right of owning land and bearing arms. The old custom of electing a king now gave them an excellent chance of increasing their power. Two hundred years of firm and able government had made Poland the first power in Eastern Europe. It was the *szlachta* who arrested her progress. Their vanity was encouraged by a spectacle so unusual as that of the great princes of Europe coming hat in hand to sue for their suffrages, to appeal for election to the vacant throne. Their one consideration now was to escape the light burdens imposed on them by the rulers of the house of Jagiello. Would the new King build and maintain a fleet at his own expense? Would he pay such a sum into the treasury as to relieve them of the small taxes they had to pay on their

holdings of land? Would he sign away his prerogatives; marry the bride they chose; still further extend their wide privileges? On these conditions, then, any prince, native or foreign, might be King of Poland; and thus they added to their unfortunate constitution the fatal custom of extorting class bribes before they would elect a king. In time the class bribes became personal bribes, and there was still none to protest.

Naturally all the foreign Powers intervened in the elections of the Polish kings; in time they were able to intervene unchecked in the internal affairs of Poland. Each new king subscribed to the *pacta conventa* dictated by the *szlachta*. What could be done against a hierarchy of great nobles who controlled the purse, the militia, and the right of making war or peace; and controlled the election of the king as well? We shall see that the first of their foreign kings was glad to escape from his throne after a brief year's enjoyment of the doubtful honour. The second used his own troops and his own money to fight Poland's battles, and got small thanks for it. The next recoiled from an unsuccessful attempt to reform the Constitution; and his successor, Wladislaw Wasa, after so limiting his rights at his coronation that he was powerless, planned a *coup d'état* which his sudden death alone prevented from being realised. His brother succeeded him, to resign in disgust after striving for years to extricate Poland from the slough into which she had fallen. John Casimir saw his best generals perish on warlike expeditions made hopeless by the inadequacy of their forces, and the meagre supplies doled out by the parsimonious *szlachta*.

"Magnanimous Polish gentlemen!" he said in his farewell speech to the Diet in 1667, "you are a glorious republic, and have *Nie pozwalam* and strange methods of business and behaviour to your kings and others. We have often fought together, been beaten together by our enemies and ourselves;

and at last I, for my share, have had enough of it. I intend for Paris, religious literary pursuits, and the society of Ninon l'Enclos. I wished to say before going, that according to all record, ancient and modern, of the way of God Almighty to the world, there was not heretofore, nor do I expect that there can henceforth be, a human society that would stick together on those terms.

"Believe me, ye Polish Chevaliers, without superior, except in heaven, if your glorious republic continue to be managed in such manner, not good will come of it but evil. The day will arrive, and the day perhaps is not far off, when this glorious republic will get torn to shreds hither and thither; be stuffed into the pockets of covetous neighbours, Brandenburg, Muscovy, Austria, and find itself reduced to zero, and abolished from the face of the world. I speak these words from the fullness of my heart and on behest of friendship and conviction alone, having the honour at this moment to bid you and your republic a very long farewell. Good morning for the last time!"

In the reign of this King the principle of the *Liberum veto* was stretched so far that in 1652 one member dissolved the Diet by his voluntary withdrawal. The local Diets began to elect their deputies with instructions that they should explode the Diet if certain local demands were not met. Later, in the reigns of the Saxon kings, Augustus II. and III., Diets were exploded by members in the pay of foreign governments. Between 1695 and 1762 no less than twelve Diets were dissolved before even the Marshal had been elected to preside over their deliberations. Such were the effects of the constitutional procedure so jealously guarded by the Polish nobility.

A time came when other Powers forced the prince of their choice upon the Poles by force of arms, and drove the ruler actually elected by the Poles into exile and the fear of death.

And this was but the prelude to the extinction of the kingdom. Until the dismemberment had actually begun, the *szlachta* still clung tenaciously to their right of impeding all public business, and of playing traitor to the State without incurring any legal punishment. In such a country the administration of justice was necessarily a farce. Personal administration by the king ended in the reign of Stephen Batory. The Courts of the Starostas were notoriously ill-conducted. "As disorderly as a law court" was and is still a proverbial saying in Poland. Corruption and other forms of venality prevailed; the people had no faith in their judges. The paralysis that afflicted the head of the Government extended to all its limbs.

Even amidst the disorders of the eighteenth century, the riotous election assemblies, the factions, the cynical corruption, the nation was not without voices of warning. In 1734 King Stanislaw Leszczynski issued an urgent but vain appeal to the nobles to rally in defence of a Poland in imminent danger. "I reflect with dread," he told them, "upon the perils which surround us. What forces have we to resist our neighbours? Do we trust to the faith of treaties? How many samples have we of the frequent neglect of even the most solemn agreements. We imagine that our neighbours are interested in our preservation by their mutual jealousies, a vain prejudice which deceives us, a ridiculous infatuation which formerly lost the Hungarians their liberty, and will surely deprive us of ours, if, depending on such a frivolous hope, we continue unarmed. Our turn will come, no doubt; either we shall be the prey of some famous conqueror, or perhaps even the neighbouring Powers will combine to divide our States."

As it happened, Poland became, on various occasions, a victim to both the eventualities so shrewdly foreseen by Stanislaw. Nevertheless the King's presentiment passed unheard. The gradual decadence of the country had begun

with the deprivation of the rights of the plebeians in the reign of the later Jagiellos. At the period we have now reached in Polish history this decline was enormously hastened. In another hundred and fifty years it had achieved its terrible climax and tragic end.

CHAPTER XIII

STEPHEN BATORY

THE death of the last of the Jagiellos had been awaited by an expectant Europe. The position in Poland was perfectly well understood in every Court on the Continent; the ancient line of kings was about to end, and the crown of the most powerful state in Eastern Europe was to be thrown open to competition. For years ministers had been intriguing on behalf of ambitious monarchs, and all kinds of candidates had been suggested by interested persons. The single possibility which did not present itself—the fact seems hardly credible—was that a Pole should be chosen to fill the throne when it became vacant. There happened to be no noble with any pretensions to succeed the last of the Jagiellos. Yet had there been one, and he sufficiently eminent, there is no reason to suppose that the jealousy of his fellows would have permitted him the crown.

But from every part of Europe there were forthcoming candidates whose power and importance flattered the vanity of the Polish nobles, as the wealth of some of them aroused their cupidity. The Czar of Muscovy, the Emperor Maximilian, John the Third of Sweden, Henry of Valois, brother to the King of France and heir to the throne, the Archdukes Ernest and Ferdinand, and the Duke of Ferrara were all anxious to assume the mantle of Sigismund II., when he should die. The number of candidates did not exceed the number of conflicting interests represented in Poland. Those parts of Lithuania in

which the Greek Church flourished, favoured, naturally perhaps, the Muscovite Czar. The dissidents, led by Jan Firlej, the Grand Marshal, were determined to perpetuate the religious tolerance which had been won in the reign of Sigismund. There was an anti-Austrian party led by Jan Zamoyski, a man with great influence among the general body of the *szlachta*. John III. of Sweden, who had married a princess of Jagiello blood, had a sentimental following, if no more. It was reported, too, that young Henry of Valois was willing to relieve Poland and her nobles of many of the burdens and expenses of administration if he were elected to the vacant throne. This tale was sedulously fostered by Montluc, the French Minister at the Polish Court, who was lavish of promises in public, and did not stint French gold in private.

Confusion as to precedent caused the Primate, as Interrex, to make an unfortunate mistake at the outset. He called a meeting of the Senate to consider procedure, and ignored the great body of nobles. The protest that followed was loud and effective. The procedure was altered, and a general Convocation was summoned at Warsaw to decide how the election should be conducted. At that Convocation several important questions were discussed, one of them being the method of election. Eventually it was decided that this should be public, the whole of the nobles being assembled that their voices might be heard; and as a consequence the kingdom was committed to the riotous and sanguinary scenes that marked all future elections.

The convocation also drew up a set of conditions to which the new king must subscribe; they are now famous in Polish history as the Henrician Articles. The elected king (they declared) should have no voice in the election of his successor; he must adhere to the terms granted to the dissidents; no war must be declared, and no military expedition



Stephen Batory.

undertaken without the consent of the Diet; no taxes must be levied without the consent of the Diet; the king must appoint a permanent council of five Bishops, four Palatines and eight Castellans; this Council was to be changed every year and elected by the Diet; the Diet must be summoned every year and oftener if needed; it must not last longer than six weeks; no foreigner must hold any public office; the king must neither be married nor divorced without the consent of the Diet.

When the election Diet actually assembled, sufficiently extraordinary scenes were witnessed in Warsaw. The nobles, 40,000 in all, came to the Diet from all parts of Poland, and all of them armed to the teeth. Their retainers brought the number up to 100,000. The immense assembly met on the great plain without the city walls, and it became obvious from the opening of the proceedings that Henry of Valois was likely to be elected. The circumstance that principally mitigated against his chances among the dissidents—namely, the recent Massacre of St Bartholomew—Montluc was able to explain away to his own and to the general satisfaction as an outbreak of religious fanaticism among the citizens of Paris, for which the king would inevitably punish the ringleaders. A decision, therefore, was taken in favour of Henry of Valois. The usual *pacta conventa* were then prepared, and were signed by Montluc on Henry's behalf. He engaged that the king should marry the Krolewna Anna, sister of Sigismund II.; and should confirm the Warsaw compact.

These liberal undertakings by Montluc on his behalf were afterwards confirmed by Henry in every respect save one: he refused to marry the Princess Anna. He pointed out that the lady was forty, and he himself twenty-two years old, and pleaded to be excused on the score of this disparity of age. After a great deal of discussion his plea was admitted, and he was crowned at Warsaw without being obliged to comply with

this arduous condition of royalty. Henry soon dissipated, however, any satisfaction the Poles may have experienced in their choice. He introduced a new standard of profligacy into Warsaw, as might have been expected of the product of a court so abandoned as that in which he was reared. He made no attempt to disguise his dissatisfaction with his first Diet, in which there was a powerful minority of dour dissidents. The deliberations of the Senate, over which he presided, were prolonged for seven hours a day, and were hardly inspiriting to a young stranger from Paris. He soon took up his residence at Cracow, frankly avowing his reason: it was so much nearer Paris than Warsaw.

A year after his election the news reached him of the death of his brother, Charles IX. of France. He appeared in the Senate dressed in royal purple, and begged to be allowed a time of solitary mourning. Apparently he had planned to ask for permission to visit France, but with characteristic cowardice he shrank from taking this constitutional step. He caused it to be announced that he would remain in retirement for some days; then, in plain English, he fled. In natural indignation at this insult the Poles sent a deputation to Henry, demanding his immediate return. He was found dancing in company that was far from staid. The necessary interregnum was extended to permit of his arrival; but this consideration was of no avail. He never came back to Poland.

Once more, therefore, the crown of Poland was offered at auction to the highest bidder; and once more, unfortunately, the nobles sought the personal advantage of their class, and of particular sections of their class, in disposing of it. Again an ostentatious display of force marked their meetings; some of the Palatines were accompanied to the Warsaw Diet by as many as 1000 retainers. It soon became apparent that the magnates, or great nobles, had decided to appoint the Emperor Maximilian. But they had to reckon with the opposition of

the large class of lesser nobility, led by the anti-Austrian Jan Zamoyski. The Emperor's name was greeted at the Diet with cries of "We will not have a German!" and feeling grew to fury as one day succeeded another and there was no choice made. The Diet began on November 7, 1575, and on December 10 the Senate, which had its separate place of assembly, decided to elect the Emperor. The following day 7000 nobles met in protest, and at that meeting the name of Stephen Batory, Prince of Transylvania, was first favourably mentioned. A deputation of Senators was sent to the Emperor to advise him of his election. Zamoyski and his following, however, stood firm, and on January 18, 1576, the *izba*, or lower assembly of the Diet, elected Stephen Batory as King.

. . . . . .

This prince was the foremost warrior of his time, and a man of gigantic stature and dignified presence. His qualities of mind were equal to his physical attributes; he was a great orator, a master of statecraft, and an able leader of men. The only circumstance considered to disqualify him for the Polish crown was his connection with the Sultan of Turkey. He held his principality in fiefship from the infidel, to whom he did homage. But rather than tolerate a German king of Poland the *szlachta* were willing to overlook even this disadvantage. So it followed that when the final Diet assembled on January 18, 1576, Stephen Batory was elected (in his absence) as King of Poland, the sole condition being that he should marry Anna Jagielonczyk. He was advised of his election by swift couriers, and at once set out from his capital of Stuhlweissenberg to enter into enjoyment of his new dignity. The Emperor, however, had not relinquished his ambition or his hope of success, and mustering an army, he also set out for Warsaw. The imminent conflict was averted by a message from the Sultan of Turkey, who warned the Emperor that Transylvania had been under his protection for 130 years, that

he recognised his vassal and ally, Stephen Batory, as King of Poland, and that he would regard Austrian interference as a reason for war. The chief external advocate of the Emperor Maximilian had been the Papal Nuncio Laureo, who fled to Rome without waiting for the coming of Batory. Nevertheless the new King was anxious to convince the Pope that he was a staunch Catholic, and that his connection with the Sultan had been a matter more of policy than of personal inclination. He succeeded in effecting this by a judicious letter, and as he showed no animosity against the Nuncio, the latter returned to Poland and was soon on excellent terms with Batory.

The new King made an imposing entry into Cracow for his coronation, which took place on May 7. He was accompanied by his nobles, who made a brave show in silks and jewels; and by his bodyguard of a thousand veteran warriors. But the most prominent and even picturesque figure in the procession was the King himself, whose great size and dignity of countenance are said to have impressed all spectators. He wore regal attire: an attila of scarlet damask thrown across his shoulders, and a mantle of crimson embroidered with sable. His hose were grey and his buskins yellow; and he rode a huge bay horse like a soldier. Behind him were led two more great warhorses, all caparisoned in gold and jewels, and occasioning much astonishment and admiration among the citizens of Cracow. In this manner Stephen Batory came for the first time among his subjects.

He was not slow in displaying his considerable qualities of diplomacy and generalship. The Tatars were dispersed, and the hostility of Austria was turned to friendship. The latter success was achieved through the Nuncio Laureo, whom he had effectually conciliated, and whose good offices were obtained in making a defensive alliance with the Emperor. When Dantzig, the wealthy port on the Baltic, ventured to object to the new King, Stephen at once set out for the place,

and before the citizens had time to organise an effective resistance, he was under the walls. The city was quickly reduced, and made no further show of hostility. Then he turned his attention to Muscovy, whose designs on Livonia had been gradually maturing ever since the open breach with King Alexander. Batory's message to the Czar was direct and to the point; the Muscovites were ordered to evacuate Livonia. He was now dealing with Ivan IV.—Ivan the Terrible—and it supposed no especial imagination on Stephen's part to foresee the reply he would receive. His demand was ignored by this monarch, who had already become indifferent to the power of Poland, having been permitted by the latter to pursue his aims for some years without check or protest.

From the outset of his reign the King had had to contend with the opposition of the great nobles, but he was in a better position to wage war on Muscovy than many of his predecessors. In the first place he had brought with him to Poland from Transylvania a force of veteran Czech warriors, whom he knew and could trust. In the second place his staunch supporter Jan Zamoyski, now Chancellor and a noble of great wealth and influence, ensured him support both in men and money. He accordingly carried the war into Muscovite territory and in 1579 captured Polock. In the following year he won the battle of Toropetz, and again retired to winter quarters. In vain he tried to induce Ivan to discuss terms, or even to meet him in the open field. The message he addressed to the Czar was direct to the extent of disdain, branding him as a "sneaking wolf," and a "vile, venomous cur."

"Why dost thou not come forth and meet me in the open field?" he wrote. "Why dost thou not defend thine own subjects? Even a poor little hen covers her chickens with her wings when a hawk hovers in the air above her; but

thou, a two-headed eagle forsooth, for such thy seal proclaims thee, dost nothing but skulk away and hide!"

Even this challenge could not move the Czar to engage the Poles openly in the field; and encouraged by his enemy's inactivity, Stephen embarked a year later on an even bolder venture. He penetrated as far into the domains of the Czar as the important city of Pskoff, and to that formidable stronghold proceeded to lay siege. The magnitude of the task might well have appalled a lesser man; it certainly struck fear into the hearts of the Poles who took part in it. Their assaults had failed in the face of the strong walls of the fortress, and the venture bade fair to end in disaster, when suddenly Ivan surrendered. Terms of peace were made in the Treaty of Zapolsk, which gave to Poland all Livonia, with Polock and Wieliz—a notable victory for the King of Poland. He returned in triumph to Warsaw, only, however, to meet a sullen and thankless Diet. The nobles were hardly reduced to a sense of shame by his loyal supporter Zamoyski, who in a speech of thanks deplored the attitude of "this ungrateful people." But the King was not greatly concerned about their bearing to him. He had cut off Muscovy's access to the sea, and was content with the security he had obtained for his northern provinces and his valuable port of Dantzig.

An incident soon occurred which demonstrated in a striking manner that no man in Poland, however great his name, or powerful his connections, was secure from the justice rigorously administered by this virile and able King. The most powerful family in Poland at the time were the Zborowski; and a member of this family, Samuel Zborowski, was accused of murder, another member of the family being charged with complicity in the crime. The family exerted all their immense influence to shield the culprits; but with the aid of the Chancellor Zamoyski, the King brought them to trial. After a scrupulously fair hearing, the murderer was convicted and

executed; and his brother, who had been the accomplice, was exiled. It says much for the great power and prestige attained by Stephen Batory that none of the great nobles dared manifest the resentment they felt at this act, which met with only approval among the lesser nobility and gentry.

In religious matters, the King followed the policy of his predecessor Sigismund II., respecting the established liberties of the dissidents. He was himself, however, a whole-hearted Catholic, and always anxious to impress the Holy See at Rome with a sense of his orthodoxy. Failing to obtain the reform he sought in the obsolete educational methods of the University of Cracow, he extended the encouragement given to the Jesuits in the reign of Sigismund, with the result that excellent schools were soon established in all parts of the country, and the growing exodus of Polish scholars to other countries was stayed. The trouble from raiding Tatars, which he had been called upon to quell upon his accession, and which periodically threatened the property and the safety of the landowners of the south, also engaged his attention. He first employed the Cossacks of the Ukraina against these marauders, adding a force of 6000 of them to the Polish army, and giving them pay as well as recognising the Hetman they appointed as their representative.

His overtures to the Pope were a part of a policy that he attempted to mature in the last years of his reign. Although he had been the Sultan's vassal, he now planned to drive him out of Europe under the coercion of a combination of the great Eastern European Powers. To unite Muscovy, Hungary, and Poland against Turkey was no easy task, but he hoped with the aid of the Pope to accomplish it. He, better than any other contemporary ruler, knew the power of the Sultan, and the nature of that monarch's plans and ambitions. He recognised that his very existence in Europe was a standing

menace to Christendom. He had hardly contrived to influence the Pope with these ideas, however, and his schemes were but on the brink of realisation and possibly success, when suddenly he died, leaving Poland a prey to the factions which broke out immediately upon his death.



Henry of Valois, King of Poland.

Afterwards Henry III. of France.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WASA KINGS

THE successor chosen to Stephen Batory was Sigismund Wasa, heir to the throne of Sweden. He was also nephew to Sigismund II., and so of Jagiello descent. From the very day of Stephen's death, the election promised to be an exciting one, because of the rivalry between the Chancellor Zamoyski and the powerful family of the Zborowski. In the preceding reign justice had been done to two members of this family, owing to the courage of Zamoyski and the firmness of Stephen. The Zborowski family seized the opportunity now afforded by the King's death to assert themselves, and so far dominated the Convocation Diet of March 1587 that they succeeded in getting all the members of Batory's family banished from Poland until after the election.

The election Diet was fixed for June 29, and the Senate, to prevent possible disturbances, had limited the number of followers for any one noble to fifty, and had also forbidden the arming of these attendants. This restriction was completely ignored, and every powerful man brought as many retainers as he could muster to the Diet. The worst offender was Zamoyski himself, who came attended by 6000 men under arms, and even with artillery and all the other adjuncts of an army.

There were two camps at the Diet, one known as the Chancellor's, and the other as the General's. The latter was the centre of Zborowski influence, and from it demands for the

return from exile of the members for the family who had been banished were pressed. Finally the Zborowski declared a *rokosz*, a formal revolution recognised by Polish and Hungarian custom. There was nearly a pitched battle before the demand was withdrawn, and the business of the election was continued.

The Zborowski supported the Emperor Maximilian; the Lithuanians wished to elect the Czar; and Zamoyski proposed Sigismund of Sweden. In the Chancellor's camp Sigismund was declared elected, and at the same time Maximilian was hailed as king in the camp of the General. Sigismund was elected on August 19, 1587; he landed at Dantzig on October 7; and he was crowned at Cracow as Sigismund III. on December 27. Maximilian had not yielded without a fight. Before the coronation, Zamoyski defeated him under the very walls of Cracow; but he came again the next year, supported by Zborowski, only to be defeated again at Byczyna.

Sigismund was a young man of twenty-one, and the product of the highest culture that Europe afforded at that time. He was well-read, a fine musician, and had the grand manner. From the outset it was easily seen that he was about to come into serious conflict with the Chancellor who had done so much for him. He was disposed by instinct, by religion, and by reason to a friendliness with Austria. His marriage with the Archduchess Anne strengthened this disposition. Zamoyski's one political creed was to keep Poland free from Austrian influence. These differences of opinion reached the extreme length of Zamoyski convoking an Inquisition Diet to consider the "plots with Austria," as he termed them; but peace was made by a tactful woman, the mother of the newly-wedded Queen. Zamoyski and Sigismund were reconciled, and when Sigismund wished to travel to Sweden to assume the crown of his dead father, the tardy permission he received was due to Zamoyski's good offices.

Sigismund went to Sweden in 1592 and was absent for one year. In 1598 he went again, but his aspirations encountered grievous disappointment at the battle of Linköping, where he was utterly defeated. He returned the rejected and uncrowned King of that country, though even now unwilling to admit it. The rock on which he had foundered was his own ardent Catholicism, made keener by the religious zeal of his wife. His attempt to enforce his faith upon the Protestant Swedes was bitterly resented. He was accused of having accepted a large gift from the Pope on condition that he introduced religious compulsion; and he returned to Poland with very harsh opinions of his native country. Shortly after his return his wife died; and he married her sister in 1602, again estranging Zamoyski, who retained all his anti-Austrian prejudices. In 1605 Zamoyski died, and his place was taken by Nicholas Zebrzydowski. Politically Poland was now at the parting of the ways; scenes of obstruction in the Diets prevented all business from being accomplished; and it was becoming impossible to administer the affairs of the country. The fatal theory that all business must be done unanimously was wrecking the possibility of transacting any business at all.

In 1606 Sigismund had the courage to propose a reform of the Constitution which would establish the principle that the will of the majority should rule. This proposal alarmed Zebrzydowski; he at once instituted a confederation to protest that this proposal was calculated to destroy personal liberty. As the King showed signs of persisting with his proposals the confederation declared a *rokosz*, and proceeded to discuss the dethronement of the King and the election of Bocskay to the monarchy.

Finally the King was driven to arms. He called in the Quartians, or guards of the border, and issued a manifesto

condemning the *rokosz*. Then he sallied forth and crushed the rebels at Jarnowiec. The Diet, on being convoked, displayed its customary aversion to any decisive action. A resolution was passed which referred to "malpractices by the King" and threatened that if, after three warnings, they were repeated, the people would be absolved from their allegiance, and a new king would be appointed. Meanwhile the rebels were still under arms; and though Sigismund again defeated them at Guzow in 1607, and in 1609 a general amnesty was declared, the right to revolt was in this manner added to the other rights which precedent permitted to the Polish *szlachta*.

Sigismund's external enemies included his own people of Sweden, who invaded the Polish province of Livonia in 1600. Two years later, Zamoyski, with but a small force, gave them battle, and they suffered so badly that Charles IX. offered to renounce all claim to the province, if Sigismund would abandon for ever his own claim to the crown of Sweden. This the Polish ruler refused, and the war dragged on. In 1604 the Swedes were defeated at Weisenstein, and at Kirchholm in 1605; but it was not till 1630 that the province was returned to Poland by the Treaty of Altmark.

The claims raised to the crown of Muscovy by the various impostors who posed as the actually murdered Demetrius gave Sigismund an opportunity of maintaining Poland's eternal quarrel with the Czar, and of carrying the war into Muscovite territory. In 1610 the great general Zolkiewski defeated the Muscovites at Kluszyno, and captured the upstart Czar Vasily Shuisky. Wladislaw, the sixteen-year old son of Sigismund, was crowned Czar; and in the next year the strong border fortress of Smolensk was taken by the Poles. This they retained when peace was made at Deulino, Wladislaw in the meantime having had to leave his throne at Moscow in some haste.

Sigismund died in 1632, having, through no fault of his own, failed to establish the power of Poland and consolidate the kingdom by force of arms. His reign produced the greatest generals of the day; among them Zolkiewski, Chodkiewicz, and Koniecpolski, each of whom achieved astonishing success with the most inadequate forces. The miserliness of each successive Diet prevented the establishment and equipment of any substantial army, however, even for the defence of Greater Poland itself. Pay was not forthcoming for the small armies these leaders were able to muster, and it became impossible to follow up even the most brilliant victory. Sigismund was equally unfortunate politically. His attempt to reform the Constitution rebounded on himself, and with even greater force upon his successor, from whom the nobles exacted still further curtailment of the attributes of the Crown.

. . . . . .

The Crown devolved quite naturally upon his son Wladislaw. There was no long interregnum, no exciting election, no division of the nobles into two camps. They were agreed as one man that Wladislaw was the only possible king. He was popular, and of an agreeable and generous disposition; and accordingly they prepared the *pacta conventa* for him to sign, expecting they might exact much from so facile a nature. Their anticipations were justified, for on being crowned he swore, among other things, never to declare an offensive war, nor form alliances, nor hire mercenaries, without the consent of the Diet or of the Senate. He promised also to relieve the nobles of the land tax and the hearth tax; and to fill all the vacant offices of State within a certain time.

The land tax and the hearth tax were the only taxes formerly demanded from the nobles. They now explained that they wished them removed, as they savoured of servitude. As the

nobles owned practically all the land of Poland, it is easy to see how these remissions curtailed the ordinary revenues of the State—always insufficient. But Wladislaw needed help to resist his former subjects, the Muscovites, who were now laying siege to Smolensk. Therefore he agreed to all that was asked of him. When he asked his first Diet for money to arm against the Muscovites, he was refused. The case was urgent; he pawned his crown, and sold the Elector of Brandenberg an exemption from homage for East Prussia; and so gathered together a force of some 15,000 men. With these he relieved Smolensk, and made with the Czar the treaty of Polanowo. Then he turned on the Turks, and these now proving placable, he returned to Warsaw in triumph.

One among the many things every Polish king was made to promise on coronation was to maintain at his own expense a fleet in the Baltic. Wladislaw attempted to carry out his promise. He bought some ships, and established two naval bases near Dantzig. When the Swedes owned the Baltic provinces, they drew a large revenue from port tolls at Pillau, and other places. Wladislaw now proposed to maintain his fleet with money obtained in the same way. The Senate gladly endorsed the proposal, but the port of Dantzig refused to pay. When the new fleet was sent to bring them to reason, the burghers of Dantzig called in the Danes, who destroyed the vessels. Nor could Wladislaw induce his legislature even to punish the people of Dantzig for this outrage on the first and only Polish fleet.

Sheer despair at his Diets and his Senate appears to have driven Wladislaw to contemplate an absolute monarchy. That was only possible if he were backed by a strong army of mercenaries; and for this purpose he designed the Cossacks of the Ukraina. The Ukraina was the debatable land about the mouth of the river Dnieper, and here, as at the mouth of most

of the large rivers, a community of Slavonic backwoodsmen had settled. The Ukrainian Cossacks occupied a peculiar position in respect to Poland, since they helped to guard the border. They comprised men of all kinds and conditions—knights who had been outlawed, or who loved adventure; and serfs who had tired of servitude. They had fortified the mud islands at the river's mouth and made them almost impregnable; and they frequently went on plundering expeditions in their wooden skiffs, victimising the Turkish ports for preference, and selling their plunder to the merchants of Poland. Stephen Batory found them excellent soldiers, and added six regiments of them to his army. They were infantry exclusively at first, but he mounted two thousand of them, and they developed a genius for cavalry fighting. They also improvised defensive camps with their wagons (presumably on the lines of the Boer laager), and in these *tabors* they proved invaluable at covering a retreat, or fighting a rearguard action. Batory had given them rights and privileges; the town of Tretechimorin as a capital; the right of electing their own Hetman; and a flag, a horsetail, and a mirror as signs of their worth. They had their own elective council, to which alone they owed allegiance; and as they drew pay from the Polish Diet as soldiers, their independent position disturbed the Polish nobles not a little. Whenever possible the Diet withheld their pay, and otherwise treated them with surprising lack of consideration. They were first-class fighting material, and better disposed to the Poles than to the Tatars, whose border-raids they repelled, or the Turks, whose seaports they plundered for the benefit of the Polish merchants.

Among this people there now arose a man with a grievance, Bohdan Chmielnicki. His farm had been burned and his infant son slain by a Polish noble; and he could obtain no redress. Before the King himself it had been shown that he

had no right to own land; and the King was not able to help him. But Wladislaw put a sword in his hand, and told him, "You are a soldier now," and Bohdan served in his army. Later he joined the Cossacks, and became their Hetman, and a thorn in the side of the Turks. The relations that existed between this man and the King can with difficulty be defined. It is established that Wladislaw in the later years of his reign received emissaries from the Cossacks, and that the sudden junction of Bohdan and a band of Tatars did not disturb the King as seriously as might have been expected. Potocki marched out to meet them, and was defeated at Korsun in 1648; and the news had hardly reached Poland when Wladislaw died. In 1650 another victory was won by Bohdan at Pilawice, during the reign of John Casimir.

Then began a reign of terror in the Ukraina. The Cossacks showed by unimaginable cruelties how real was their hate for the Polish nobles. The latter sought refuge in their strongest castles, and humbler folk fled as far into the interior as they could penetrate. Whatever may have been the plans of Wladislaw, John Casimir was in no way privy to them. He undertook personal negotiations with the firebrand Bohdan; but while these were proceeding, Jeremiah Wisniowiecki fell upon the Cossacks and defeated them with great slaughter at Zbaraz. A peace afterwards made at Zborow was not observed, and Bohdan, defeated at Berestesko, turned to the Czar for help.

In 1654 the Muscovites invaded Lithuania, and Charles X. of Sweden considered it a good opportunity to attack Poland. He swept through Pomerania into Great Poland and entered Warsaw in August 1655; and by the end of October Cracow was in his hands. As a matter of expediency he was offered the Polish crown under the customary constitutional conditions. His reply was to proclaim himself King of the hereditary monarchy of Poland; and to emphasise his meaning, he



Wladislaw IV., King of Poland.

exacted heavy levies of money from the nobles, and showed his distaste for Catholics by actual persecution. Soon, however, the affairs of his own kingdom recalled him to Sweden, and John Casimir seized the chance to form a confederation in the Palatinate of Belz, among its members being John Sobieski. When Charles returned he found that half Poland was already lost to him, and an encounter with John Sobieski did not bring him much consolation, as his forces narrowly escaped disaster between the Vistula and the San. Then he laid siege to Dantzig; while John Casimir, with a strong force, recovered Warsaw. Charles did not leave him long in possession of the capital, and in the first flush of his success proposed a partition of the conquered territory. The Czar, the Elector of Brandenberg, and Rakoczy, Prince of Transylvania, were invited to share the spoils with him.

But at this juncture Denmark declared war on Sweden, and Austria also prepared for attack. Poland lost its attractions, and in June 1657, Charles abandoned the country, to the great relief of the King. At the same time death freed John Casimir of another awkward adversary in the person of the inveterate Bohdan. The Cossacks lost their spur to enmity, and subsided into comparative quiescence. John was also able to make peace with the Grand Elector of Brandenberg by forfeiting his claim to suzerainty (1658), and in 1660 made peace with Sweden by the Treaty of Oliva. Hitherto John Casimir, who like an earlier king of Poland, had left a monastery for the throne, had managed by great good fortune to maintain his position. But he still had the ruler of Muscovy to face. Soon the Czar Alexis invaded Lithuania and captured Wilna, the capital. Potocki and Lubomirski, going out to meet him, found the Muscovites encamped at Cudnow, where they awaited reinforcements of Cossacks. The Polish generals turned aside and succeeded in overwhelming

the latter at Slobodyszcza; then returned to Cudnow, where they surprised and captured the main Russian force.

For the first time Poland had a real breathing-space. It was occupied, however, in intrigues of the most ruinous kind. The first was a plot to provide a French successor to John Casimir, and was engineered in the first place by his Queen Louise Gonzaga de Nevers. The chosen candidate was the young Duc D'Enghien, and the method employed was the customary one of corruption. First the Senators were suborned with bribes—to the great anger of the lesser nobility, who found a champion in Lubomirski, the Grand Marshal. Lubomirski's protest was entirely justifiable, since the plot was unconstitutional, but his action ended in his exile. The victorious army had also a grievance in the matter of arrears of pay, which the Diet refused to remedy. The army pointed to the wealth of the Church, and brought down upon themselves the enmity of the clerics. Sobieski came to the rescue, and paid enough from his private purse to induce the army to renew the defence against the aggressive Muscovites.

A more serious danger than the Muscovite now threatened, however, for the Cossacks had joined forces with a Tatar horde numbering quite 100,000, and were invading the southern provinces of Poland. Sobieski again hastened to the rescue, and inflicted an exemplary defeat on the Tatars at Podhajce; while the Cossacks were glad to make peace. Then, in 1668, John Casimir decided to return to his cloister, and accordingly relinquished the throne.

. . . . . .

The consequent interregnum lasted nearly two years. It would be idle to recapitulate all the candidates for the vacant throne. Among them were:—

(1) The Prince of Condé, the hope of France, who was sup-

ported by the French wife of John Sobieski, and in consequence by Sobieski himself.

(2) Charles of Lorraine, openly supported by Austria.

(3) Philip William of Neuberg, the candidate offered by both France and Austria by way of compromise.

(4) The son of the Czar, in support of whose interests 80,000 Muscovites were massed on the Polish frontier.

The customary lavish expenditure of money preceded the election; and the sittings of the Diet were marked by the usual display of force. At the most exciting moment somebody raised the cry of "A Piast," and the Poles gave expression to their customary dislike of foreign princes. The candidates who had been assiduous in intrigue and bribery for two years were promptly abandoned; and Michael Wisniowiecki was produced from an obscurity he appeared to covet. With tears he protested that he had not sought this honour; but the Poles shouted "Long live King Michael Wisniowiecki," and the election was over.

Patient research reveals no reason for this remarkable choice. The new King was in no way distinguished; he was not wealthy; and he hated the first man in the kingdom, John Sobieski. His father was that Jeremiah Wisniowiecki who had routed the Cossacks, and the very name was loathed in Ukraina. The first result of the election was to bring down the Tatars and Cossacks in swarms upon Poland. They were encountered by Sobieski, who drove them out, but recommended that concessions be made to the Cossacks. The King took the opposite view, and when the matter came for consideration before the Diet, he found a pretext for dissolving the assembly.

King Michael had been betrothed to the daughter of Sobieski's sister; but an Austrian intrigue was now in progress with the object of uniting him to Eleanor, the daughter of the Emperor Leopold. This marriage suited the King for political

reasons, and he entered into it without consulting the Diet, an unconstitutional step which made him more unpopular than ever.

Meanwhile his obstinacy in refusing to conciliate the Cossacks had borne fruit. Bohdan's successor, a man named Doroszensko, paid a visit to the Sultan, who granted him protection and made him Hospodar of the Ukraina. A swarm of Tatars was sent against Poland—and though the suspicious King alleged and perhaps actually believed that Sobieski had secretly directed their attack, this really redoubtable warrior was again sent out to encounter them. The Cossacks were on their way to join forces, but Sobieski, by rapid travelling, got between the two armies and dispelled the Tatars. Then he turned, and once more disposed of the Cossacks. So the danger was again averted. But Sobieski knew that the real danger lay in the Sultan, whose attack must inevitably come sooner or later; and he tried to rouse the King to prepare for a struggle. His efforts were worse than useless; he became actually ill from chagrin, and retired to his estate at Zolkiew to recover. Whereupon his sympathetic army formed a confederation and succeeded in forcing the hand of the King, with the result that Sobieski was in time after all to check the victorious inroad of the Sultan.

That monarch had marched upon Kamieniec, and taken it. He then turned on Leopol, when the Polish army encountered him at Buczacz. Sobieski struck shrewdly and hard, routing the Turks with great loss, and was preparing to follow up his success when his sovereign made a hasty and ill-judged peace. By the Treaty of Buczacz he ceded to the Sultan not only Kamieniec, but all Ukraina and Podolia, and further agreed to pay tribute in the sum of 22,000 ducats a year. The Diet, however, encouraged by the indignant Sobieski, refused to ratify the Treaty, and in 1673 the unlamented Michael died, setting Sobieski's hands free—as it afterwards proved—to save Europe from the Turk.

CHAPTER XV

JOHN SOBIESKI AND THE DELIVERANCE OF VIENNA

JOHN SOBIESKI, who was next elected to the Polish throne, was descended from an ancient Polish family, and had inherited a large estate from his father. He had enjoyed the advantage of a good education, his tutor being a celebrated Polish scholar named Stanislaw Orzechowski. He had also the advantage of early travel, having spent some time in Paris and even visited London, a rare thing for a Polish noble at that time. His wealth, his fine presence, and his skill in arms gave him very great influence, and his services to John Casimir against Charles X. of Sweden were so notable that when the danger was over the King made him *Chorazy*, or standard bearer of the Crown.

His highly successful campaign against the Muscovites has already been described. It has also been related that he maintained a fighting army from his own private purse while the Muscovite danger remained urgent. He subsequently had the misfortune,—there is no other word for it, though Sobieski himself appears not to have suspected it—to encounter Mary, the widowed daughter of the French Count d'Arquien. She was then thirty years of age, but looked no more than twenty. She was of a vivacious nature, and bore her widowhood of a month lightly enough. Encouraged by the Queen, Louise de Nevers, John Sobieski married her out of hand; and thereafter could not disentangle himself from the eternal French intrigues at the Court of Poland.

John Casimir, during his reign, treated Sobieski with the distinguished consideration his services merited. After the exile of Lubomirski he appointed him Grand Marshal in his stead. On his subsequent return from a victorious campaign against the Tatars and Cossacks, he was made Grand General as well. As Grand Marshal he was at the head of the administration, received ambassadors, and wielded wide civil powers. As Grand General, he had absolute control over the army—a matter of unparalleled good fortune for Poland.

The election of Michael Wisniowiecki as King, on the abdication of John Casimir, was distasteful to Sobieski for two reasons. He was pledged, through the intrigues of his wife, to the selection of the Prince of Condé; and the failure of the latter's candidature involved him in considerable domestic unhappiness. The jealousy of the new King tied his hands at the most critical moments; and the royal ineptitude diverted much of the benefit Poland should have derived from the brilliant feats of arms of Sobieski. His King seemed to be alone in denying him the appreciation that was his due. After the great victory over the Tatars at Podhajce the Diet hailed him as the saviour of Poland. When the birth of his eldest son James coincided with this success, all the monarchs of Christendom competed for the honour of acting as godparents; in the end Louis XIV. of France was godfather, and Queen Henrietta Maria of England godmother. Great honour was again paid him in his own country when, after the battle of Buczacz, and the peace (however inglorious) that followed, the Diet greeted him amid scenes of unexampled enthusiasm, as a hero "who seemed, if the system of Pythagoras be true, to unite in his own frame the souls of all the great captains and good citizens of the past." The same Diet did him the more substantial honour of reversing the shameful peace of Buczacz. To carry on the war they arranged to raise an army of 60,000 men, and to place full authority in his able hands.

It is quite true that the money for the army was not forthcoming, but the confidence his fellow-countrymen invested in him certainly moved Sobieski deeply.

He expressed his gratitude by draining his own purse for this purpose; and the Pope, whom tradition credits with unfailing generosity towards warriors against the infidel, came to his assistance with a substantial sum. A treasure maintained at Cracow for extreme emergencies was also drawn upon, and finally Sobieski went out to meet the Turks, who were entrenched, 80,000 strong, at Chocim. The Polish army was outnumbered by three to one, but the military genius of Sobieski more than made amends. He succeeded in routing them utterly, and was engaged in the valuation of the spoils when the news was brought him of the death of King Michael. However, there was still work to be done in the field, and he remained to do it, notwithstanding the fact that a Diet had been called and had already met for the election of a new king. Great was the surprise of the nobles to learn that John Sobieski was not there. Queen Eleanor, the widow of Michael, was deeply concerned in the election: she wished to marry Charles of Lorraine, and shrewdly conceived that this might be made a condition of his election. Another candidate was the Duke of Neuberg, the son of that Philip William who had been rejected when Michael was elected; he was supported by Louis XIV.

The Diet had already descended to demonstrations of anger and abuse when the news arrived that John Sobieski was coming. When it was verified, the whole Diet went forth to meet him; and his entry into Warsaw was truly a notable event. His few but chosen followers led the procession; then came sixty-six banners captured on the field of Chocim, and brought, as he subsequently explained, as a present for the future king; then the burly figure of Sobieski himself, a man of great girth and stature on a great grey horse; and, last

of all, a long line of captured Janissaries, the first ever seen in Warsaw. After greeting Sobieski with great warmth and enthusiasm, the Diet resumed its deliberations. Many amazing assemblies were held at Warsaw, but this one was perhaps the largest and the most splendid. The nobles with their retainers were said to have numbered 150,000; the assembled envoys and princes, with their retinues, came from every State in Europe. Imposing and picturesque as ever, on this occasion the city gleamed gaily, a white vista of stone towers and wooden gables, under the brilliant summer sun. No Pole who attended had not made every sacrifice to be attired worthily; all bore arms; all revelled in the excitement and ostentation of the occasion, and the pleasures and profits of the victory against the Turks. Great sums of money were spent in feasts and tournaments, and the burghers reaped a rich harvest of gold. Nevertheless, the election had its sinister side, and there were constant wranglings between the supporters and retainers of the various candidates, invariably ending in the flashing of swords and the letting of blood. More dignified were those quarrels which were settled by tourneys, conducted with all the extempore chivalric pageantry of an age that for almost all other nations had passed.

Sobieski himself added to the confusion of issue that really lay at the root of this fantastic assembly by making a speech in which he urged the claim of the Prince of Condé. It was not possible that he could be chosen, but the fact that he was supported by Sobieski was enough to destroy the chances of any other candidate. The election was ended at last by an inspiration of Jablonowski, the Palatine of Red Russia. "Poles," he cried, "if we are deliberating here on the election of a king, if the most illustrious dynasties are courting our suffrages, if our liberty remains secure, to whom do we owe it all?" The suggestion was not slow to be seized upon,

and the cry of "Sobieski!" came from a thousand Polish throats. The deputies recalled his great deeds, his greater character; they remembered that he too was a Piast; and they raised the cry of "Long live King John Sobieski!" It remained, however, for Sobieski himself—hero and patriot, he was still conservative by instinct and a lover of caution and custom—to point out that the sun had now set, and that no election could take place on that evening. He was urged to set precedent aside. It was represented to him by his friends that any delay in the election might be fatal to his chances and to the welfare of Poland. He chose to adhere to precedent.

But Poles could be generous, and the Diet proved as generous as he. His wife was not liked, and it had been suggested as a condition of his election that he should divorce her and marry the widow of Michael. The condition was proposed to him on the following day, but he indignantly opposed it. His refusal, however, did not affect the unanimous vote of his countrymen, and when the Diet dissolved the choice it had made was the worthiest in all its history.

. . . . . .

John Sobieski did not wait to be crowned. His brief absence from the seat of war had been the signal for the return of the Turks and Tatars. They captured a Polish army at Chocim, the recent scene of his own great victory, and put every man to the sword. But they did not abide his coming, and the summer drew to a close without his being able to effect an encounter. A winter campaign was a new experience to the Polish nobles, but as the King announced his intention of staying in camp for the winter, his army stayed with him. The Lithuanians, however, led by Michael Pac, an inveterate enemy of Sobieski, deserted and went home. Thus it was with a small army, but a resolute, that he met the Turks outside the walls of Leopol. He was outnumbered by

eight to one, but he led his cavalry against the enemy in a charge whose violence and vigour nothing could withstand. As he advanced, it is told, the summer sky became overcast, and a sudden storm of cold hail hurled itself in the faces of the enemies of Poland. The elements themselves seemed to ride with Sobieski's little band of horsemen, and the Turks turned and fled. John Sobieski chased them across the Danube, then returned reluctantly to Warsaw and the crown that awaited him there. "Like an eagle he moved to the enemy," said an old chronicler, "like a tortoise to the throne." He was crowned at Cracow in 1676.

His first task was the appointment of officials to the chief offices of State. Here he chose the most meritorious, notwithstanding the fact that they were his old opponents. Declining to hold the post of Grand General any longer, he appointed Demetrus Wisniowiecki in his stead. As Primate he appointed Olszewski; as Grand Marshal Lubomirski, the son of his old enemy; and as second general Jablonowski. Then, in accordance with his fixed determination to see the quarrel with the Sultan through to the end, he asked for a bigger and better army. The Polish forces consisted mainly of cavalry; what infantry there was had nothing to recommend it. He succeeded in getting the sanction of the Diet to the raising of a force of 30,000 good foot soldiers, and to bringing the strength of the army up to 75,000. An attempt to defeat his proposals he met—and it is characteristic of his tenacity of purpose—by holding a continuous sitting of the Diet for forty hours, and remaining there all the time.

This army was never actually at his disposal, but he went out to meet the Turks with something even better. The battle of Leopol, and the blinding storm of hail, had made for him a sufficient reputation with the Turkish Janissaries, who regarded him as one for whom Allah was always fighting, against whom, therefore, it was useless to contend. He found

his old enemies inclined to peace, and accordingly entered into a treaty with them at Zurawno. The Sultan retained Kamieniec and about one-third of the Ukraina; while the question of Podolia was left in abeyance. Such terms were infinitely better than those made by Michael at Buczacz, though even these left something to be desired.

His next Diet, without considering that these were great advantages for an army of 30,000 at the most to have wrested from 100,000 of the most vigorous and courageous of soldiers, complained bitterly of the cession of Kamieniec. The King explained that the recovery of the city was only delayed, but the Diet dissolved with some bad feeling. However, the peace was never really observed, for a new Grand Vizier had come into power. Kara Mustafa—Mustafa the Black—had had no experience of Sobieski and consequently had no fear of him. He refused to confirm the treaty of Zurawno, and demanded that Podolia be ceded forthwith.

This ambitious Grand Vizier was hatching a scheme which involved more than an attack on Poland. He planned the conquest of the whole of Central Europe. His first blow was to be aimed at Austria. As Mohammed took Constantinople so would Mustafa capture Vienna, and clear the way to a Turkish Empire extending as far north as the Baltic. Sobieski, whose apprehensive eyes were continually turned to the source of danger at Constantinople, seems to have probed the plan before it was even suspected elsewhere, and to have approached the Pope for aid in averting it. The King's path was made easier by the rupture of his old intimate relations with France. The Queen, who wished to visit Paris as a monarch, had been warned that she, the daughter of a doubtful count and the wife of an elected King, could not expect royal honours at the French Court. Her wish that a dukedom should be conferred upon her father was not honoured, and she was bitter in her complaints of French

ingratitude. Her humour for once suited the King, and, with the aid of the Pope, he angled for an arrangement with Austria. The Pope, as ever, was well disposed towards a Crusade against the infidel; and was willing to subsidise it. The Emperor Leopold, who did not see the danger that threatened him, but was at war with France, was eager to detach a powerful French adherent. He promised to add 60,000 men to the 40,000 promised by Poland, and to address Sobieski as Majesty, an honour he had previously withheld from the elected Kings of Poland.

Kara Mustafa had gathered 300,000 men at Constantinople, and opened the proceedings with a feint at Hungary. Duke Charles of Lorraine was thereupon despatched with 30,000 troops to meet him, when the attack suddenly turned, and the Turks headed straight for Vienna. Lorraine also turned, just in time to make some preparation for the defence of the city.

The inhabitants were in a state of confusion and terror. On the night before Lorraine's entry, the craven Emperor, with his whole court, had abandoned the city to the fate that seemed inevitable. "Nothing was heard," says the historian, "but reproaches against his ministers and the baneful influence of the Jesuits, and execrations against a sovereign who, after drawing on them the enmity of the Turks, had left them without protection. The city was unprepared for resistance, surrounded with an extensive suburb, the fortifications dilapidated, and the garrison unequal to its defence. On one side people were hurrying from the country to the capital as to an asylum; on the other, the burghers followed the example of their sovereign in flying from a place which seemed devoted to destruction. The roads were crowded with fugitives and covered with carriages laden with valuable effects; the churches and public places filled with the aged and the helpless, imploring Heaven for protection."

The arrival of the Duke of Lorraine at Vienna effected, in some measure, a recovery of equanimity. In conjunction with Count Staremberg, the brave and skilful governor of the city, he hastily prepared for a siege. The suburb was destroyed, the fortifications rapidly repaired, the burghers drilled to assist in the defence. Finally Lorraine left 8000 of his own infantry to reinforce the garrison, and with his cavalry rode out across the Danube, with a view, as far as possible, to harassing the movements and interrupting the communications of the Turkish army, until a relieving force should arrive from Germany or from Poland.

Kara Mustafa appeared before Vienna on July 14, 1683, and proceeded at once to the investment of the city. Throughout the siege the most gallant endeavours were made by the Duke of Lorraine, in spite of the inadequacy of the force under him, to deter and destroy the enemy. He succeeded in repelling an attack on Presburgh, thereby saving an important passage over the Danube, and in repressing Tatar incursions and risings of malcontents in Moravia. Notwithstanding, the siege continued with unabated severity. "The besieged," runs the narrative, "were driven to the last extremities for want of provisions; thinned by sickness and the sword, they saw the enemy in possession of the principal outworks, and were in hourly expectation of being taken by storm. Every hope of relief seemed extinct, every exertion unavailing."

Meanwhile urgent messages were being sent to Sobieski, who was busy preparing his army at Cracow. Lorraine sent courier after courier to hasten its movement by reports of the increasing success of the siege, and the weakening efforts of the defenders. The Emperor himself, in despair at the imminent fall of his capital, pressed the Polish King to set out for Vienna without waiting until his own army should be ready. "My troops," Leopold wrote, "are now assembling;

the bridge over the Danube is already constructed at Tulu to afford you a passage. Place yourself at their head; however inferior in number, your name alone, so terrible to the enemy, will ensure a victory!"

The invitation prevailed. Sobieski had grown enormously in bulk—indeed, it was common knowledge that he had to be helped on his horse—and the Turks were confident that he would never take the field. Even his own allies, who had offered him the leadership of the combined armies, hardly expected him to accept. But on the arrival of the Emperor's message he saddled his horse, gave orders to his army to march for Vienna immediately it was ready, and rode out from Cracow at the head of 2000 horsemen. He made the 350 miles from Cracow to Vienna in ten days!

At Tulu, however, the Polish general found the bridge unfinished, and no "troops assembling," as Leopold had declared, but those few already under the Duke of Lorraine. Deeply disappointed and disgusted, Sobieski is reported to have exclaimed, "Does the Emperor consider me as an adventurer? I quitted my own army to command his. It is not for myself but for him I fight!" At the instance of Lorraine—a generous prince and a fine soldier, who declared his pride at serving under so renowned a warrior—Sobieski was induced to await the arrival of his own troops, which reached the Danube on September 5th. Four days later they were joined by the German reinforcements. With an army increased in all to about 60,000 men, Sobieski advanced against the Turks. On the night of the 11th the beleaguered garrison and citizens received encouraging signals from the army of relief. On the following morning, September 12, 1683, they were moved to tears of joy and gratitude by the sight of the Christian banners raised on the Calemberg. The siege was raised.

As we have said, the Turks did not dream that Sobieski would stir from Cracow to disturb their plans. He fell upon

them at a moment when their last desperate effort to take the town by storm had been repulsed, and his cool and intrepid generalship turned a temporary check into a terrible rout. The Poles were placed on the right wing, under Jablonowski. In the centre were the Bavarians and other German forces, commanded by Prince Waldeck. The Austrians, led by Lorraine, were on the left. The advance over broken ground was made in the early part of a very hot day, and the attack preceded by accurate use of the Polish artillery. Then came the whirlwind cavalry charge, which the Turks had never been able to withstand. It was delivered at the close of the day, and darkness came on to save the ranks of the infidel. During the night of September 11th Mustafa secretly withdrew his forces from before the walls of Vienna, and by the following evening his whole army had reached the Raab—so precipitate was their flight. In the morning, when Sobieski's troops burst into the Turkish lines, they found the enemy gone, but in his place an almost incredible booty—all the Turkish tents, baggage, ammunition, and provisions; one hundred and eighty pieces of artillery; the ensigns of the Vizier Mustafa's authority; and even a standard, supposed to be the sacred banner of Mahomet. The unimaginable splendour of the spoils inspired Sobieski, with characteristic geniality, to write to his Queen: "The Grand Vizier has left me his heir, and I inherit millions of ducats. When I return, I shall not be met with the reproach of the Tatar wives, 'You are not a man, because you come back without booty!'" Afterwards, however, when he had munificently distributed his own share of the plunder among those Austrians who complained that the greater part had fallen into the hands of the Poles, while they themselves had incurred the heaviest losses, he was to write: "I shall have nothing to bring home to you but the buffalos and the camels."

On the morning of September 12th Sobieski entered Vienna.

"As he passed through the camp and the ruins of the town," reads the stirring chronicle, "he was surrounded by the inhabitants, who hailed him with the titles of Father and Deliverer, struggled to kiss his feet, to touch his garment or his horse, and testified their gratitude by marks of affection which rose almost to adoration." At the Cathedral of St Stephen a service of thanksgiving was held, and a discourse preached from the apposite text: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." The Viennese forgot their own monarch in their generous haste to pay honour to the Polish King; and to this fact, and to a very natural pique, must be attributed the sour behaviour of Leopold.

The meeting of the two monarchs did not take place until September 17th, and then it was of the most formal description. They met on horseback, between the Austrian and Polish armies; the Emperor plainly clad and meanly mounted, awkward in address and demeanour; the Polish King, with all the dress and deportment of the soldier he was, rode easily, in spite of his great size, on a splendid courser. At a given signal the sovereigns advanced, saluted each other and embraced. The conversation was brief and embarrassed. Leopold neglected to notice Sobieski's son James, whom it was proposed to betroth to Leopold's daughter; and his thanks for the Polish deliverance of Vienna were expressed with such apparent reluctance that Sobieski listened with hardly concealed disgust. "Brother," he cried impatiently at last, "I am glad to have done you this small service," and turning his horse he rode away.

In spite of the remonstrances of the chivalrous Duke of Lorraine, Leopold appears to have continued in his sullen humour; and this, and the dissatisfaction of the Bavarian and Saxon princes also at the Emperor's deportment, prevented the victorious troops from immediately following up their



A Polish Soldier—probably John Sobieski, King of Poland.

By Rembrandt. At Petrograd.

victory. It was not until October 27th that the allies crossed the Danube to attack a Turkish force at Parkan. Here Sobieski, galloping with characteristic ardour and impatience at the head of his cavalry, was surrounded in an ambush, and only the courage and devotion of his followers, and the timely arrival of aid from Lorraine, saved his life. The temporary check the Christian troops received here was soon overcome. On the following day the Turks were completely overthrown. Seven thousand of the enemy were killed in battle; many fled to the fort of Parkan; the remainder were drowned in attempting to cross the Danube. The fort was then taken by the sword, and the survivors driven into the river. The strongly-fortified city of Gran, which had been held by the Turks for seventy years past, and was defended by a garrison of 4000 men, was the next to fall to the victorious arms of Sobieski; and after it surrendered all the other Hungarian towns which had been taken by the invader. The Turks were driven completely out of Hungary.

The city of Cracow was white with the snows of a hard winter when Sobieski made his triumphal entry on Christmas Eve. He had saved Europe from the Turk. The Ottoman power never recovered from the crushing blow he dealt it under the walls of Vienna; and the Turkish dominion, having now reached the extreme of its limits in Europe, entered upon its gradual decline. Kara Mustafa returned a shamefaced fugitive to Constantinople, where he received from his master, for sinister reward, the bowstring. Though the name of John Sobieski rang through Europe as that of the saviour of Christendom, the remainder of his life was nevertheless a series of disappointments. He made more than one attempt to regain Kamieniec, the province he had previously ceded to the Sultan, but seemed doomed to failure. Finally he recognised that his days of active service were over, and went into a retirement so complete that it was persistently rumoured


POLAND
IN THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
SWEDEN
BALTIC SEA
ESTHON
LIVONI
Ceded to Sweden
1660
COURLAND
SAMOGITIA
POMERANIA
WEST
PRUSSIA
EAST
PRUSSIA
LITH
MASOVIA
GREAT
POLAND
SILESIA
VOL
LITTLE
POLA
HUNGARY
MUSCOVY
U A N I A
HYNIA
N D
Acquired
by
Poland
1667
UKRAINA
PODOLIA
Petrograd
Schlusselburg
Narva
Novgorod
Pskoff
Rostoff
Tver
Moscow
Riazan
Twer
Polock
Witebsk
Smolensk
Orsza
Minsk
Mohilew
Dnieper
Kiow
Pultowa
Kanow
Bar
Konigsberg
Danzig
Thorn
Posen
Warsaw
Cracow
Lublin
Radom
Sandomir
Zamosc
Brzesc
Grodno
Wilna
Troki
Pinsk
Pripet
Chernigoff

that he had died. But he had one other object to live for, and to this he now devoted all his attention.

None recognised better than he the evils that afflicted Poland as a direct consequence of the elective system of monarchy. The history of the country, and the example of other lands, proclaimed to him the superior advantages of a dynastic system. He had trained his eldest son to succeed him, and he strove by every means in his power to provide for that succession while he was still alive. His first effort was directed towards an alliance with Austria, in order that his son might have the powerful support of the Emperor. In this he was disappointed. The promised match with Leopold's daughter fell through; and instead his son married the daughter of Philip of Neuville. The bride was not pleasing to the Queen, and the King's private life was embittered by constant quarrels between his wife and his heir. His open desire to ensure the succession to James provided his enemies with a ready weapon, and set his Senate eternally at cross purposes. So bitterly did he resent the attitude of the senators that in 1689 he prepared to abdicate, but the unanimous and openly-expressed desire of the lesser nobility, ever his most ardent champions, had the effect of restraining him. His death was followed by a bitter wrangle between the Queen and James Sobieski, which ended in James driving his mother and her supporters from Zolkiew, literally at the cannon's mouth. The cause of this quarrel, it may be remarked, was the division of the King's treasure.

James Sobieski was the father of that Princess Clementina who married the elder Pretender and was the mother of Charles Edward Stuart.

CHAPTER XVI

POLAND AND HER NEIGHBOURS

THE gradual decline of Poland, which began with the extinction of the Jagiellos, was hastened after the death of John Sobieski by a variety of circumstances. Most important of these, naturally, were the chaotic Constitution of the country, and the undue aggrandisement of one class of the community at the expense of the others. But the growth in importance of the *szlachta*, and their gradual usurpation of all functions of the State, was accompanied by the rise in size and strength of two neighbouring Powers, whose innate vigour, diplomatic cunning and political unscrupulousness were presently to crush the unfortunate kingdom out of existence.

On the East, Moscow had gathered all the separate States of Russia together, by force of power or of persuasion, and welded them into a great Empire. Ivan III., as we have already seen, had extinguished the old Russian republics of the north, and to the wide territory he left, his successor Vasili added Novgorod, Siewierski, and Ryazan. At Vasili's death, his territory extended from Chernigoff to the White Sea and from Livonia to the River Karna. His successor Ivan IV., Ivan the Terrible, subdued the Tatars, and successively annexed Kazan and Astrakhan. He took the title of Czar, and desired to be styled "Czar of all the Russias," a title successfully disputed on behalf of Lithuania by Stephen Batory. By this time the Russians were all gathered into two kingdoms: the Eastern Russians under the power that

was Muscovy but was fast becoming Russia; the Western Russians in the Lithuanian division of Poland. When Ivan died in 1584 he had ended the power exerted in his kingdom by the boyars, or great barons; but the country was then afflicted for over thirty years by internal dissensions, which so weakened it that a Polish prince, Wladislaw IV., was actually able to crown himself Czar at Moscow. A more successful era in the history of the kingdom was inaugurated by the accession of Michael Romanoff, who, with his father's assistance, ended the internal strife, and laid the foundations of the great power wielded by his successors, Alexis and Theodore. Subsequently western culture and custom began to penetrate into Russia, where they found expression through the genius of Peter the Great (1689–1725). His internal reforms and capacity for organisation first gave Russia a place among the great nations of Europe.

Peter the Great succeeded in building up a powerful internal administration in his country. There was much for Russia and the Russians to learn, and throughout his reign the country was highly receptive, largely influenced by outside nations, but exercising little influence in its turn, save upon its immediate neighbours of Poland and Turkey. To Peter, the rapid decay of Poland was plainly apparent, and the scheme afterwards elaborated by his successors, of encouraging the disintegrating factors in the Polish state and so making Poland in every way subservient to Russia, was of his inception. In earlier reigns Russia had seriously put forward candidates for election to the throne of Poland, and several Czars had been disappointed in the hopes they naturally based on the support they received, as orthodox rulers, in orthodox Lithuania, as against Catholic princes from western countries. Peter himself, however, was content to support the claims of some prince who could be made subservient to Russian interests; and to aggravate the weaknesses

of the Polish constitution into actual disintegrating forces.

As a result of this policy, as we shall see, the Polish noble who was actually elected by the Poles as King of Poland was driven from the country, through the machinations of Russia, and a mere puppet of a prince of Saxony was established, with the support of Russian troops, in his stead. Every attempt to reform the Polish constitution, and to abolish the paralysing Liberum veto, came to be defeated by Russian agents, who employed this hindrance to legislation in order to suspend or dissolve any Polish Diet likely to apply itself seriously to business beneficial to the kingdom. The legitimate heir to Peter's policy was Catherine the Great, who brought it to actual fruition. In the dismemberment of Poland that resulted, Russia gained the lion's share.

Catherine the Great was undoubtedly the most remarkable woman and the ablest ruler of her time. She was born in a petty German principality, and baptised as the Princess Sophia Augusta Frederica of Anhalt-Zerbst. Her early upbringing was that of any of the thousands of lesser German princesses to be found in central Europe during that period. The turning point in her life occurred in 1744, when she was but fifteen years of age, and she left Stettin with her mother for a visit to St Petersburg, there to be betrothed to Peter, the heir to the Russian throne. In the same year the marriage took place, and this young girl of fifteen, "of a cold and calculating disposition," became the Grand Duchess Katherina Alexeievna. Her husband was reported semi-idiotic, though in truth he was only a very brutal and unintelligent prince. The mutual aversion of the two was a strong and a natural one; and Catherine, a stranger to Russia and married to a detested husband, had a difficult rôle to fill. She first sought to make friends and adherents in her new surroundings. She applied herself with energy to the task of learning the

Russian language. She cast off her old environment and everything likely to identify her with it. She became more Russian than the Russians themselves.

The task of self-education to which she applied herself was from the beginning a congenial one. The range of her reading and study soon became remarkably wide; and she established personal relations with many of the most advanced thinkers of the day, in every part of Europe. When she was thirty, and after a series of erotic adventures, she made Gregori Orloff her favourite for politic reasons; and with his aid and compliance she formed a party which centred in herself and her ambitions. Her husband succeeded to the throne in 1762, and at once fell under the influence of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia. It was notorious, however, that he intended to divorce Catherine, and send her to spend the rest of her days in a monastery. A number of persons and influences, all adroitly manipulated by Catherine, engaged in a conspiracy against Peter. It ended in his deposition and murder, through the instrumentality of the Orloff family; and Catherine ascended the throne.

Many portraits, true and traditional, have been left of this remarkable woman. They are all unanimous in the matter of her considerable physical attractions; her intellectual power; and the amazing complexity of her personality. Her whiteness of skin, her wit, her gaiety, her vivacity have each furnished subject for praise from the most fastidious of her age, of whatever sex. Her subtlety, her deliberation and tenacity of purpose, her clarity of vision, and her utter lack of scruple are attested by her achievements. Her personality was of so dominating a quality that by its full exercise she invariably contrived to subjugate the men she chose as instruments of her will. The character and career of one of these, in the person of Stanislaw Poniatowski, the last King of Poland, and one of the ablest and most accomplished of his race, if

lacking in courage of any high order, provides a tragic testimony to her feminine arts and artifices as to her deep political cunning. She planned for Russia a new and successful foreign policy, and made the country no longer a state passively receptive to external influences, but a power which might and did impose its will and policy on great nations. The active military operations of Russia she contrived to confine to those eastern portions of Europe where Russia had most to gain, while she skilfully involved other and rival nations in quarrels which left her own country free to pursue the aims dictated by her boundless ambition.

Catherine had need, however, of all the statecraft she exercised on behalf of her Empire, for her wits were matched against those of a monarch equally famous and hardly less remarkable—Frederick of Prussia. The growth of the power of Prussia out of the lawless brigandage of the Teutonic Knights furnishes one of the most important studies in modern history. Indeed, it is hardly exaggeration to assert, in view of recent events, that this national growth shaped the destinies of Europe. It has already been indicated in this work that the beginnings of the kingdom arose out of and coincided with the extinction of the Teutonic Order, when Albert of Brandenburg adopted the Protestant religion, and as the first Duke of Prussia did homage to the King of Poland for his fief of East Prussia. Between that realm and the Electorate of Brandenburg lay West Prussia, a portion of the kingdom of Poland, and a desirable acquisition to the western State, if only on account of its great port of Dantzig. The power of modern Prussia grew out of the Thirty Years War, and the gradual weakening of the German Empire by religious differences which found their expression in those murderous racial conflicts that divided Central Europe into hundreds of petty principalities. Brandenburg, under the rule of Frederick William, the Great Elector, contrived to keep clear of this

struggle, and even to derive profit and advantage from it, as also from the wars between Poland, Sweden and Russia. By casting in his lot with Poland against Sweden he arranged, by the Treaty of Wehlau in 1657, that the Dukedom of Prussia should be ceded to him in its entirety, and free of the homage formerly paid for it to the King of Poland. His successor, Frederick, who acceded to his throne in 1688, was the first King of Prussia; and from him the kingdom descended to the keeping of Frederick the Great, his grandson.

Born in 1712, Frederick was in his youth the victim of the capricious sternness of his father Frederick William, the second King of Prussia. He was brought up on the principle that anything he desired must be to his disadvantage and undoing. It was of little avail to rebel against such severity of discipline, such absence of sympathy as he experienced on the part of his parents. Once he planned to leave Prussia and the tyranny to which he was subject, and, in the company of two young officers, to take refuge at the Court of England. The plot was discovered, however, and the young Frederick had the terrible experience of seeing one of his accomplices executed before his window. Even he himself did not escape the threat of death, or the penalty of insubordination. He submitted then to his father's will, but was deprived of his rank in the army and made to retrieve his early career by a series of unexampled humiliations. Like Catherine, he applied himself to the task of self-education; and it was at this painful period of his life that he formed his predilection for the philosophy and literature of France later to be commemorated in his famous friendship with Voltaire. These sympathies were so marked that he afterwards employed French as his medium of literary expression, and has left some remarkable prose and some pretentiously dull poems written in that language.

Frederick succeeded to the throne of Prussia in 1740, and

became a monarch as absolute as Catherine herself. He has placed it on record that he regarded himself as the "first servant of the State." His ministers were his servants in very fact, and bore no other relation to the kingdom than that of highly-paid but hard-worked clerks. His theory of government and his internal policy were clear and precise. Prussia was to be raised to the status of a great power by sound finance and the organisation of a strong army. He fulfilled this theory so well in practice that when he died there were 70,000,000 thalers in the Treasury, and the standing army of Prussia numbered 200,000 highly efficient soldiers. In person he was slightly below the middle height, and even as a young man inclined to be stout. This physical tendency however, gave way in his later years to a disposition to leanness, so reversing the natural habit of his race. The qualities of his mind may be judged from his written works. He possessed the clear, colourless intellect of a man without illusions and without sentiment. Like Catherine, he maintained intimate relations with the greatest thinkers of the day; and his friendship for Voltaire was characteristic of his mental attitude and intellectual sympathies. His policy of expansion was directed for the most part against Austria, and during his reign he managed to sow the seeds of the strife which finally robbed that power of its supremacy among the Teutonic races. In his own life-time he deprived it of the rich province of Silesia, and he was able, single-handed, to wage a successful war for seven years against the combined forces of Austria, France, Russia, Saxony and Sweden.

Frederick the Great, like Catherine, foresaw the eventual extinction of Poland, and, like Catherine, he had a supreme interest in the ultimate possession of the divided limbs of the victim. The province of West Prussia, which separated two divisions of his own kingdom, and contained the best port on the Baltic, the half-German city of Dantzig, was particu-

larly the object of his envy and desire. Events moved more quickly, however, than he had originally anticipated; and, as shall be shown, he was forced to revise his early opinion that the work of acquiring this province would fall to the lot of his successor.

These two great Powers, to the east and to the north-west of Poland, were both hostile in religious matters to the Poles. Russia was the greatest surviving supporter of the Orthodox Church; Prussia was the leading Protestant power upon the Continent; while Poland, as we have seen, was the most easterly outpost and stronghold of Rome. A third and more elderly rival was also pressing upon the Polish borders, but this was a power allied to Poland in religious sentiment. Austria had long exercised a strong influence upon Polish policy and Polish government. Like Russia, she had from time to time sought to acquire influence in Poland by securing the elective influence of the Polish nobles. Like the others, however, Austrian expectations encountered constant disappointment; though one Austrian Emperor, Maximilian, was actually the chosen candidate of the greater nobility and pursued his claim to the Polish crown by force of arms. With the growth of Russian and Prussian influence the waning strength of Austria gradually revived; and this revival coincided with the comparatively harmonious union of the Austrian Empire with the kingdom of Hungary under the sceptre of the young Queen, Maria Theresa. For her sake the Empire had set aside the Salic Law, and after a disintegrating war, settled down to a career of renewed prosperity.

Maria Theresa was a woman of less brilliant qualities than the two great monarchs whose careers have been already sketched in this chapter. Her influence with her people was due in the first place to the chivalrous regard awakened by her youth, her beauty, and the array of her enemies in Europe.

But she too possessed mental attributes of no mean order, and moral scruples and a degree of rectitude of which none would willingly accuse either Catherine or Frederick. She was the senior of both, and already an old woman when the events that led to the dismemberment of Poland occurred. The fact that enough of ambition for power and territory still survived in her to quench her religious sympathy and her qualms of conscience furnished the last misfortune that could have occurred to the unhappy kingdom of Poland. Its end was hastened by the abandonment, however reluctant, of moral principle and the claims of justice on the part of a woman whose public reign and personal career admirably reflected her high qualities and sympathies.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SAXON KINGS

JOHN SOBIESKI'S death in 1696 left unfulfilled the two great ambitions of his life. The first was to found a new Polish dynasty; and this he had hoped to accomplish by assuring the succession of his son, James Sobieski, to the throne. The other ambition, easier and nearer of accomplishment, was to drive the Turks out of Podolia and the city of Kameniec.

He had striven to prepare the way to the succession of his son by contracting for him an ambitious alliance. He selected for him as spouse the sister of the Emperor of Austria himself. Although this plan miscarried, in the intriguing that preceded the next election the whole support of Austria was exerted on behalf of the son of the dead monarch. But there were many other influential candidates, and each had a strong backing from one of those Powers whose foreign policy included a perpetual intervention in the affairs of the Poles.

The first choice of France—for Louis had at least two candidates—was Prince Henri of Condé; the other was Prince Louis of Conti. Prussia offered a candidate in the person of the Margrave Lewis William of Baden Baden. Frederick Augustus, the most Protestant Elector of Saxony, intimated his willingness to sacrifice everything, even his Protestantism, to help the Polish nation.

The self-seeking of the Dowager Queen ruined any chance of election that James Sobieski may ever have possessed. Mary d'Arquien has been described as the bad angel of John

Sobieski's reign; her fatal influence persisted after his death to baulk his most cherished ambition. Her greed, her constant intrigues with France, and her total lack of any consideration for Polish interests, effectually stultified the hopes of her son, and reduced Austrian effort to a determined plan to keep the French princes off the throne. In this the Emperor received the support of his neighbours, all of whom preferred a German to a Frenchman. The Margrave of Baden received but half-hearted support, and retired from the contest, leaving the Elector still in the field. Frederick Augustus had abandoned his army and his Protestantism at the same moment, and he was well supplied with money; nevertheless the Diet of 1697 gave a majority of votes to the Prince of Conti. The Czar had sworn to invade Poland if a Frenchman were chosen, and presuming on Peter's threat the Elector took up arms. Thereupon Conti fled, and under the title of Augustus II. the Elector was crowned at Cracow.

Augustus had a sovereign recipe for all the ills of Poland—the maintenance of a strong regular army. He imagined that if he were allowed to maintain a sufficient number of his Saxons under arms he might reform and even abolish the Constitution. His anxiety to keep his soldiers near him, however, did not escape the vigilance of his Polish subjects, and he was limited to a bodyguard of 1200 in Cracow; but on one pretext and another he contrived to retain some 7000 in Lithuania. He was soon to be justified in this step, for he came into open contact with a very strong Lithuanian noble family, the Sapiehas. The case of Casimir Sapieha furnishes one of the most striking illustrations on record of the evil effects of the *Liberum veto*. It proved that the protest of one noble could protect a high-placed swashbuckler from the exemplary punishment nearly every member of his class desired to inflict upon him. The whole Sapieha family were characterised in this period by their rapacity and lack of

scruple, but not one of them had ever victimised the Church until Casimir Sapieha quarrelled with the Bishop of Wilna. This noble took the strong action of laying waste the whole of his opponent's diocese; scores of churches were burned, and literally hundreds of manors plundered. At two successive Diets, those of 1693 and 1695, the conduct of Casimir Sapieha was to have been considered; but the simple "I protest" of one of those present exploded each assembly, and nothing could be done. Soon after the accession of Augustus the Lithuanian nobles, fortified by the presence of the Saxon soldiers, combined against the family; and unable to face the opposition of 1700 of their class, the Sapiehas fled, not to return till after the death of Augustus.

In 1699 the War of the Holy League against the Turk ended with the Treaty of Karlowitz, and Augustus enjoyed a triumph that was denied to Sobieski; he had the satisfaction of seeing the surrender of Podolia and Kamieniec to Poland. Now he invented a fresh use for his Saxons; he turned them against Sweden. He was encouraged by his successes against the Turks to hope to wrest Livonia from the Swedish sovereign, Charles XII., then a youth of eighteen. Augustus accordingly made a pact with the Czar Peter to attack Sweden. Charles hastened to show the soldierly qualities that afterwards made him redoubtable in Europe, and utterly routed the Russians at the battle of Narva in 1700. Augustus made an abortive attempt to contest the crossing of the Dwina, but suffered a worse reverse. Too late Augustus adopted a conciliatory attitude, offering to disperse his Saxons and withdraw his claims to Livonia. The Swedish monarch replied that he would only make peace at Warsaw. On May 8th 1702, he entered the city; then turned on Augustus and the Saxons and defeated them again at Klissow. Augustus fled to Saxony, taking with him James Sobieski and his brother Constantine. Thereupon Charles cast about for a new king for Poland.

Among the names that occurred to him was that of Stanislaw Leszczynski, Palatine of Posen, then a young man of twenty-seven. He had all the charm that characterised the best of the Polish nobility—the grace of culture, a fine appearance, and a generous chivalric disposition. "You shall be King!" cried Charles, on a sudden impulse; and he set about fulfilling his promise. He was no man to consider minor difficulties, and when the Polish primate raised the objection that Stanislaw was too young, he replied, "But he is older than I am." The election that followed was illegal, according to the tenets of the Polish constitution, though no more illegal than that which elevated Augustus to the throne. There were two factions at the Diet, for though Stanislaw had many supporters, the Poles objected that he was a Swedish nominee. But the Swedes were there in force, and shouted, "Long live King Stanislaw." No notice was taken of the protestors; and Stanislaw was crowned.

Then Charles turned on the Czar. He had got as far as Lwoŵ (Lemberg) when Augustus returned with 20,000 Saxons. The returned exile found Warsaw undefended, and the nobles unable or unwilling to rally to its defence. Stanislaw fled to his protector, who once more routed the Saxons and installed his nominee on the Polish throne. Then, determined to end the Saxon turbulence, he made an incursion into Saxony and established himself at Altranstadt. The humbled Augustus was forced to sign a treaty resigning the Polish crown, setting free the Sobieski brothers, and breaking off his treaty against Sweden. But the Czar Peter in his turn invaded Poland, and Charles was roused to another effort on behalf of Stanislaw. He defeated the Russians; and, as with Augustus, carried the war into their own territory. There, however, the supreme disaster of Poltava overtook him, and left him completely wrecked. He was forced to flee into Turkey, leaving Stanislaw at the mercy of his enemies.

Augustus was not long in seizing the opportunity. He promptly issued a manifesto again claiming the crown of Poland. The claim was supported by his Saxon soldiers, and Stanislaw fled to Pomerania. Unable to find permanent refuge there, he attempted to join Charles in Turkey, but was apprehended on the way. Subsequently Charles returned to Sweden, in 1714, and, faithful to his old friendship, established Stanislaw in the little duchy of Zweibrücken. There he stayed until Charles died, when he was obliged to take refuge in France. The marriage of his daughter to Louis XV. ended his misfortunes for a time, and until the end of the reign of Augustus he found a comfortable asylum in France.

Augustus resumed the crown in 1709, encountering as little opposition from the Polish nobles as Charles had met when he placed Stanislaw on the throne. Throughout the dispute the Polish military caste had conducted themselves in no manner to earn our respect. Their martial spirit had not been displayed to any advantage; their inner dissensions had been made more than ever apparent; they had only succeeded in making Poland the plaything of the neighbouring Powers.

. . . . . .

It was now, for the first time, that the influence of Russia, which had hitherto been tacit and unassertive in Polish internal affairs, began to be openly displayed. It was not only in Poland that the growing power of Russia caused suspicion, and even fear. But nowhere was it so cynically manifested as in the Polish capital, and, on occasions, in the very Diet of the nation. Impelled by Russian emissaries, agents appeared to assert the right of veto at critical junctures. The nobles, who were wealthy and self-indulgent, dreaded the repetition of their experiences in the Northern War, and affected to ignore the sinister influence of Russia. Augustus was no longer troubled about his kingdom, except to assure

the throne to his son. To this end he was ready to divide the realm as the price of support, and he prepared a notable scheme designed to obtain the support of Russia and Austria, as well as of his native electorate of Saxony. The partition he proposed would have ensured the bulk of the kingdom as an hereditary appanage of the Saxon realm, while leaving enough to be divided between Austria and Russia to constitute a very considerable bribe. On February 1, 1733, however, he died, without seeing the success of his schemes.

The question of the succession supplied a more intricate problem than had been presented hitherto. The Polish nobles professed to desire a Polish king, and their choice fell upon Stanislaw Leszczynski. Foremost among the adherents of this prince was the Primate, Theodore Potocki, who as interrex was at the moment the most powerful man in the kingdom. He was now an old man, but wise and purposeful beyond the ordinary Polish standard. His first acts on the death of Augustus proved his courage and his purpose. He dissolved the Diet and caused the Saxon troops of the late king to be dispersed, showing no content until the last Saxon had crossed the Polish border. When bodies of troops were said to be massing along the Russian and Austrian borders, he sent small detachments to keep them under observation. On May 8, 1733, Potocki summoned a convocation Diet which met at Warsaw, and laid down the qualifications for the new King. He must be a native Pole, a Catholic, and married to a Catholic wife; they would rather have a gipsy than a German. The opinion was expressed unanimously enough, but Potocki could not get them to swear to their resolution. At almost the same juncture the Primate received a letter from Russia, the outcome of a Council held in St Petersburg on the death of Augustus. It warned him that Russia would not accept Leszczynski as king, and that Austria and Prussia were of the same mind.

Naturally France, with Sweden and Turkey, supported the Polish nominee. The Queen of Louis XV. was Marie Leszczynski, daughter of the King Stanislaw, and on French support both Primate and King relied. France warned them that Austria was massing troops along the Silesian frontier with a view to interfering with the election; while more practically, Count Monti, the French envoy, was busy purchasing all the support he could. In this manner Stanislaw Poniatowski, the Palatine of Masovia, and Adam Tarlo, Palatine of Lublin, were won to the Polish cause; it had already the support of the powerful Czartoryski family. The Russian candidate was the son of Augustus, who was also supported by Austria, though with no great enthusiasm. The Saxon was known to be opposed to the Pragmatic Sanction and was suspected by Austria of French tendencies. However, he purchased the support of the Emperor by professing adherence to the Sanction, and won over Russia finally by undertaking not to violate in any way the Polish Constitution. In other words, he promised not to free the unhappy country from the Liberum Veto. Thereupon Russian troops were assembled to enforce his election.

At this time Stanislaw appeared in Warsaw, having travelled from France in the disguise of a coachman. The Diet met and issued a manifesto solemnly cursing all who should offer help to the Muscovite. A national call to arms followed, and 60,000 mounted and armed noblemen assembled. The old Primate rode from group to group asking who should be king. The army uttered cries of "Long live King Stanislaw," and notwithstanding the opposition of some 3000 malcontents Stanislaw Leszczynski was hailed as King. At this the protestors withdrew, objecting to the election as null and void. The new King, however, did not long maintain his position in the capital; he called for a gathering of the armed gentry, but the support accorded him was so feeble that he fled to

Dantzig with Potocki and his other supporters, including the French and Swedish envoys. "The Poles will elect me, but will not support me," he exclaimed bitterly and with foreboding. Now his only hope lay in France.

His flight from Warsaw to Dantzig was followed almost immediately by the appearance of the Russians, under the command of General Peter Lacy, on the right bank of the Vistula. The Polish malcontents crossed the river to meet them, and in the Russian camp formed a General Confederation. They consisted of but 15 senators of the total 145, and with them there were only 500 of the *szlachta*; and these, on October 6, 1733, proclaimed Augustus of Saxony as King. From Dantzig Stanislaw looked for aid to France, who in the meantime had been encouraging a combination of the southern States against, among other Powers, Austria. On September 26, 1733, France allied herself to Sardinia by the League of Turin, which had as its object a new partition of Italy. She also entered into the treaty of the Escurial with Spain, as against Austria on the one hand, and Great Britain on the other. By the latter Treaty, Spain was concerned with France in the war of the Polish succession.

Stanislaw urged upon France an instant invasion of Saxony as the only way to free Poland of Augustus. But he himself was far from safe in Dantzig, from which place the Russians desired him to be driven before aid could reach him from the sea. At the end of 1733 General Lacy was despatched against this port with a force of 20,000 men at his disposal. He was obliged, however, to detach troops to hold Warsaw, where Stanislaw could still count on powerful support; also it was necessary to garrison Thorn and other Polish towns as he passed them, and his force had dwindled to 12,000 men when he arrived before Dantzig. The district swarmed with hostile guerilla bands, and Dantzig itself was protected by good artillery, well served by French and Swedish gunners. Lacy

himself had no siege guns, and experienced great difficulty in conducting an investment at all. In March of 1734 he was relieved by General Münnich, with reinforcements. But now occurred a difficulty with Frederick of Prussia, who would not permit the necessary siege artillery to pass through his territory; and on this account little progress could be made.

On May 20, a French fleet under La Perouse arrived to relieve Stanislaw, but it was too small, the total number of men being but 2400. They were quickly followed by the Russian fleet under Admiral Gordon, bringing the expected siege guns. At Dantzig then occurred the first clash of arms between France and Russia, the French having so much the worse of it that they were captured and taken to St Petersburg. There they were treated with marked kindness, and were allowed to retain their arms, even in the presence of the Empress herself. Dantzig could not now hold out much longer; and when the end seemed imminent Stanislaw adopted the disguise of a peasant and fled to Königsberg. The city capitulated on June 30, 1734, and Potocki and Poniatowski fell into the hands of the Russians. As a last resort, Stanislaw issued a manifesto to Poland from Königsberg, and a Confederation on his behalf was formed by Adam Tarlo. France was again called upon to invade Saxony in the interests of Stanislaw; and again France, in her own interests, refrained.

Nothing more could now be done for Stanislaw by his friends. Potocki and Tarlo acknowledged Augustus, though with reluctance, as King; and on January 26, 1736, Stanislaw abdicated the throne. The reign of Augustus III. was really the reign of the Czartoryskis, one of the oldest and wealthiest families of the Polish nobility. Augustus himself was a man of complacent confidence, of no particular activity, either of body or of mind. The affairs of his Saxon kingdom he left

largely to Baron Heinrich von Brühl, who figured as the actual ruler of the Electorate. A power equally extensive, or more so, was delegated to the Czartoryskis in Poland. Under their influence the King consented first of all to disperse all the Russian and Saxon troops assembled in Poland—a step which did much to placate the Polish nobles. Then he settled down to the temperate pleasures of the table, and to his only other amusement—the chase.

The two brothers who at this time were at the head of the Czartoryski family were so singularly united in purpose as to be quite literally of one mind on all Polish questions. Michael, the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania, was usually known as the Prince Chancellor; his brother, Augustus, Palatine of Red Russia, was invariably called the Prince Palatine. The latter was a bold and courageous soldier who had fought with Prince Eugene, and been decorated by him for bravery before the walls of Belgrade. He had added considerably to his own influence and that of his family by his marriage with Pani Sieniawska, the heiress of two wealthy families, the Sieniawski and the Denhofs. Like all enlightened Poles they understood that the present Polish Constitution was a fatal bar to any progress or improvement in the position of their country. They also recognised that reform must come from an united Poland, and that the young men must be educated up to the standard of understanding and action essential for this reform. Their whole aim and ambition, therefore, lay in the formation of a nucleus group of the most promising young men, and their preparation, by special training, for the work of inspiring the whole nation with ideas and practical schemes of reconstruction.

The centre of the new national movement was established at their country house of Pulawy in Volhynia, and there they gathered together all the young Poles of promise who could be induced to take an interest in the scheme. The proper training

of these propagandists became the subject of endless discussions and councils, to which theorists and teachers of every nationality were summoned. The Czartoryskis were especially concerned in producing a new and enlightened type of schoolmaster, holding that the teachers of a nation have the widest influence upon national character and development. At the same time the Czartoryskis threw the weight of their great influence behind a movement for immediate constitutional reform. They found the King amenable, not only to their advice, but to that of his Saxon Councillor, de Brühl. To conciliate de Brühl, they obtained for him a patent of Polish nobility, which opened to his family every path to honour and wealth in Poland. De Brühl, in return, gave the constitutional movement his support.

Augustus, eminently a man inclined to peace, yielded to the heavy pressure brought to bear upon him so far as to make a promise. He actually gave his word that he would abolish the *Liberum veto*. But Augustus was accessible to other influences than those of either Czartoryskis or de Brühl. He had made family alliances with the royal houses of France and Austria. His daughter Maria Josepha was married to the Dauphin, who was the son of Marie Leszczynski and so grandson of the unhappy King Stanislaw. His son Frederick Christian had married Maria Antonia Walpurgis, the daughter of the Emperor Charles VII. The *Liberum veto* was an excellent tool in the hands of any foreign power desirous of meddling with the internal affairs of Poland, and every such power was consequently anxious for its retention.

There was, in addition, a strong party among the Polish nobles jealous of the influence and power of the Czartoryskis, and suspicious of their plans for reform. At the head of this party were the Potockis, the family to which belonged the Primate who had so vigorously opposed the election of Augustus. These Poles made it their practice to defeat

the scheme for constitutional reform by the old constitutional method; they exploded any Diet where the question was even raised. De Brühl also received a strong hint which led to the severance of his relations with the Czartoryskis, and so the latter lost their Saxon support.

It was in these circumstances, then, that the Czartoryskis actually extended their hands to Russia for help, and so took the first step toward the situation which ended the existence of Poland as a nation.

CHAPTER XVIII

POLAND IN THE AUGUSTAN ERA

THE paralysis of the mainspring of progress and national development of a country is necessarily reflected in the life of the people. Some account of Poland in its last stage of decadence is now due, if only to illustrate the causes of its decay and subsequent downfall.

In every district all local life and activity naturally centred in the household of the local magnate, who often owned vast tracts of fertile soil as large as or larger than many principalities, and reigned as a very monarch among his serfs and dependents. Many of the houses were veritable palaces, maintained with a prodigality of expenditure almost inconceivable in a country the larger part of whose population were so stricken by poverty. The magnate had his major-domo, his treasurer, his cupbearer, his equerries, his gentlemen servitors, and a numerous retinue of well-born adherents. All lived at his expense, and drew some small allowance for clothing and necessary expenses. They did no menial tasks; they constantly bore their swords; and no one of them ever forgot that he was a Polish nobleman at a time when the Polish nobility were Poland herself.

The Polish writer Henry Rzewuski has left us a very vivid picture of the gentlemen-dependents of the period. His character Séverin Soplica, a typical member of the parasitical *petite noblesse*, held invincibly to the doctrine of the equality of nobles. "We are all equal among ourselves," he would

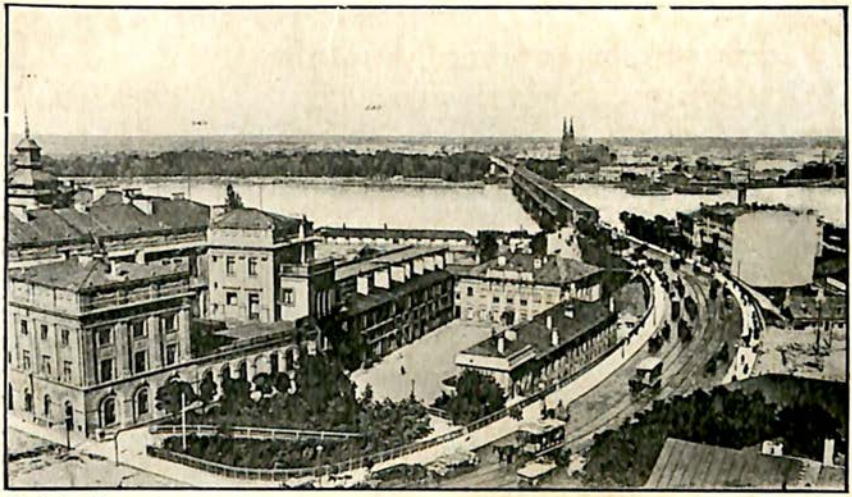
exclaim. "The lord is a rich gentleman, and the gentleman a poor lord." But in sorry contradiction of his principles of equality, Soplica readily embraced his master's knees and bowed his whole body on the ground in return for some gracious mark of favour. In spite of his principles he supported the unjustifiable actions of his master Radziwill, whose bread he ate; and as his patron ordered, so his vote in the Diet was cast. "This Soplica," declares a modern Polish writer, "with all his servility towards his 'brother magnates,' his Radziwillian patriotism and his rosary and paternoster religion—this was the type achieved by a nobility so deaf and indifferent to all the thoughts and feelings of an otherwise enlightened age."

A proportion of the peasantry were also retained for personal service in their lord's household. They provided the heydukes, the pajdukes, the wallachs, the huszars, and similar accessories of the magnificence of the magnate. They were all sumptuously arrayed in livery; and in time of war were considered as soldiers, though in the period under notice their utility in this capacity was doubtful. A great landowner might have some thousands of these retainers about his estate. Prince Karol Radziwill is said to have had 18,000, and Felix Potocki even more.

The majority of these magnates were bluff, good-natured, generous patriarchs, with an almost passionate sense of their family ties and traditions. Noble blood was in their eyes the only claim to notice; the most distant relationship was an obligation never dishonoured. They were blunt and simple in their tastes and habits, to the point of barbarism. They rode hard, drank hard, and ate heartily. Of occupations or distractions beyond these they were incomprehensibly ignorant. "The handwriting of the most eminent and distinguished magnates," writes the historian Bain, "was generally so bad that nobody, not even themselves, could decipher their letters.

Whenever, therefore, the great man had to write to a relation or a friend with his own hand, he at the same time dictated it to a secretary sitting in an adjoining room. The caligraphic copy of the secretary was then attached, as a sort of key, to the magnate's own hieroglyphics, and both documents were forwarded to their destination. It would have been simpler, no doubt, to have signed the secretary's letter, but it would not have had the same value in the eyes of the recipient."

Karol Radziwill was able to read but a little; he certainly could not write. The same authority furnishes an engaging picture of this prince, a typical Polish magnate. His tall, burly figure was surmounted by a ruddy face, with clear, laughing eyes and a long straight nose, blue from excessive potations. His scalp was shaved except for one lock; his dress was picturesque; his habit cleanly to the verge of the ludicrous; he changed his linen two or three times a day. When he attended the local Diet he came as if to a festival, accompanied by half his retinue and twenty or thirty wagons laden with provisions. At the place of assembly he would initiate an orgy of jocular junketing, often ending the day by being drawn through the main street of the town astride a barrel of wine, with the spigot running, and the admiring crowd drinking liberally from this fountain. He would distribute his jewellery and other personal effects with words of friendly abuse; and, with tears in his eyes, beg the bystanders not to let him be robbed. . . . Drink was the sign of fellowship. King Stanislaw was gravely told that he would never be popular unless he got drunk at least twice a week. A noble named Komarzewski could boast of emptying a bucket of champagne at a draught; and he and a boon companion, Sosiejkowski, were the holders of the Polish record for hard drinking. Once, on a visit to Prince Lubomirski, they tapped a butt of old Hungarian wine, and each provided himself with a beaker. One drank while the other held his vessel



Exclusive News Agency.

Warsaw and the Vistula.



Exclusive News Agency.

Warsaw—King Sigismund's Square.

On the right is the Palace of the Kings of Poland.

under the unchecked stream of wine, and so they finished the butt without allowing any of it to run to waste.

But such rude and Rabelaisian figures, though they could be found at this time only in Poland, did not properly represent the Polish nobility. As M. Eugène Starczewski observes in his shrewd work " L'Europe et la Pologne," types like Radziwill, Komarzewski and others—landed proprietors more potent than princes, proud, vain and generous—were the product of their time, the representatives of the corrupt and degenerate aristocracy of the eighteenth century. On the other hand Poland at the zenith of her power, under Sobieski and Stephen Batory, could claim for her Court the highest culture in Europe, the most ardent patronage and practice of the arts and sciences, the widest tolerance for Lutherans, Hussites, and Jews. Her name gained distinction from the patriotism, high courage, and prudent judgment of such princes as the Czartoryskis, whose estates were models of good management, and whose patriarchal care was extended to the very meanest of their peasants. Schools for the children, hospitals for the sick, care for the aged and infirm, and liberal bounty to all distinguished the administration of their territories.

August Czartoryski had married a great heiress, Pani Sieniawska, and between the two existed a mutual love, consideration and chivalrous courtesy rare even in those times of romantic traditions. The Prince administered his wife's great estate with scrupulous care, and once a year the revenues were brought to him at the great country centre of Pulawy for his meticulous auditing of accounts. The money itself was paid in gold, and brought to him in great barrels. The gold was weighed, the accounts were checked, and the money was arranged around him. Then, as Bain describes the elaborate proceeding, the Prince, seated on his dais, with the barrels of gold in a circle around him, would summon his

major-domo. "Take to her Highness the Princess," he would command, "these revenues from her estates." Thereupon a stately procession would form. At the head walked the major-domo, with his wand of silver and ebony. A group of gentlemen servitors and pages, in brilliant uniforms, followed. Then the barrels of gold, each borne by a number of heydukes or pajdukes, all in gaudy livery; with more noble attendants guarding the treasure with drawn swords. So they would go in state to the apartments of the Princess. There, as the annual custom dictated, major-domo would say, "His Excellency the Prince sends your Excellency the yearly revenues from your Highness' estates." Whereat the Princess replied, "Pray convey my thanks to his Excellency the Prince and"—with a sudden delightful dropping of convention—"take this gold back to my husband."

Such deliberate delicacy of thought and action was characteristic of the grandparents of Adam Czartoryski, the most eminent Pole of the end of the eighteenth century, and the close personal friend of the Czar Alexander. A son has left an account of August Czartoryski's deathbed that cannot be read, even in these prosaic days, and in our prosaic tongue, without emotion—so tenderly touching was the scene, so filial and faithful its portrayal. The Polish temper, whether public or private, has never failed to present such possibilities of idealism and chivalry; though it has too often been nurtured less on necessity than on unavailing hopes.

August Czartoryski died on April 4, 1782. "To the very day of his death," wrote his son Adam, "the Prince Palatine kept open house and ruled his household. He was not ill before his death, but gradually grew weaker a few days ere the end came, yet he never took to his bed, nor altered the course of his daily life. On the morning of the day on which he died he awoke early, and found that his sight was failing him; yet he got up and dressed as usual. He did not sit

down to dinner that day; but, in the evening, hearing his children talking and recognising their voices, he conversed with them calmly and gaily. When the hour arrived at which all Warsaw had been for years in the habit of making a pilgrimage to the Prince Palatine, he bade his servants carry him in his chair to his wonted place in the reception room, where he sat down, and recognising the Nuncio by his voice he excused himself in a cheery tone for his inability to play their usual game of backgammon that evening. . . . Presently he asked why the candles were not lighted; but on the attendant replying that all the lights were burning he understood that his last hour was approaching. So he sent for the doctor and asked him to feel his pulse, and tell him how long he still had to live. When the doctor was silent, the dying man said: 'Think you I fear Death? Tell me the truth without delay.'

"During this sad conversation, the room was filling with visitors and domestics, down to the very scullions, who stood in the doorway. They all desired to bless him who had been their good master for so many years. On hearing the verdict of the doctor, and when all who were present fell a-weeping, the Prince commanded that he should be taken to his own apartments, at the same time begging the Nuncio to be present with him in his last moments. The Nuncio began reciting the psalms, and at the words 'Lord, into Thy Hands I commend my spirit,' the Prince pressed the Nuncio's hand, and gave up the ghost—in the 87th year of his life."

. . . . . .

The state in which each magnate maintained his household was no less the prerogative of his wife. She had her Lady Chamberlain, her tiring women, and her wardrobe women—all of noble birth. There were also in every great house ladies of honour, who enjoyed the lord's bounty and were brought up with his own daughters; they were often the children

of poor but worthy relatives. These were educated and treated as adopted daughters; they were dowered when they married; and belonged to the family in a very intimate degree. Slightly lower in the social scale were the lesser lords, who also maintained large establishments and administered big areas of land. Their homes, however, were often huge wooden barracks, where hospitality of rather a primitive order was freely dispensed. Each guest provided his own bedding and cooking utensils, but the simple means of existence were plentifully supplied, and there was no lack of willing attendance and goodwill.

The Polish appear to have been but careless farmers, indifferent to the most elementary rules of husbandry. Good wheat land was cropped to the verge of exhaustion, and the simplest means of enriching it were neglected. The supply of fertile soil was practically inexhaustible for their purpose; they had an unrestricted market and no dues of any kind to pay, either for their exports or the dubious luxuries they imported so freely. Their daily round of hunting, drinking, and dispensing rude and summary justice was occasionally varied by a journey to Warsaw, when such opportunities occurred as the election of a king. Then they came to the capital in state, expending the income of several years on their lavish attire, retinue and entertainment. Every one of them had a number of lesser gentry dependent upon him, and the rivalry occasioned by such an event may well be imagined. Still smaller landowners were the squires of such Duchies as Masovia, each of whom lived in his little village surrounded by his down-trodden peasantry. There were, of course, thousands of nobles who had no land at all, but attached themselves to some greater or lesser magnate. But whether landed or landless, rich or poor, all the nobles of Poland were equal in the monopoly they enjoyed of the functions of the State.

The peasant, as we have seen, was tied to the land of his lord. He owed no rent for it, it is true, but he paid in a hundred other ways. So many days of work were exacted from him every month, and as these days were apportioned by his master, it is not difficult to guess that the most profitable and convenient working-times were chosen. For work on his own farm or holding, the peasant was left only the bad weather and the wrong seasons; his crops rotted on the ground while he harvested those of his master. When he did succeed in gathering them, a certain part was taken by the noble. One half of all the game he took went to the great house, which he also had to supply by his own effort with firewood, nuts, mushrooms, and many other things. In return the noble was understood to supply him with timber to build his hut, stock for his farm, implements to till the soil, and even seed for his harvest. But these rules were honoured, in too many places, rather in the breach than in the observance. Too often the peasant lived in an insanitary hovel; he counted himself fortunate above his fellows if he had a cow or two, and a beast of burden. He could seek no protection in law except in the court over which his master presided, and it was safer to take no grievances there. His best aid, counsellor and protector was generally the priest, who sometimes succeeded in influencing an oppressive noble to penitence and reform.

Nevertheless, in Poland proper, outlined accurately enough by the cities of Warsaw, Cracow and Posen, the peasant appears to have been treated with some show of consideration, even of generosity. Though tied in theory, as elsewhere, to the estates of the great nobles, he lived and laboured fairly contentedly, and in this territory the landed proprietors seem more or less honestly and equitably to have discharged their obligations and responsibilities towards their serfs or subjects. Here the patriarchal system flourished in its finest sense. In such acquired and outlying provinces, however, as Volhynia,

Podolia and the Ukraina, where the bulk of the population was different in race, language and religion from the Poles, the peasants were indubitably oppressed. The great landowners were either Poles, and so of different race, or native nobles—Cossack, Ruthenian, or Lithuanian—who had adopted Polish culture, speech, and customs, and so abandoned sympathy with their less fortunate fellows. Here, then, was passionate cause for protest, and here the hapless peasant, ill-clad, ill-housed, ill-nourished, dragged out a hopeless existence. "One never sees a smiling peasant in Poland," wrote an observer of the period; and this tragic testimony tells all that needs to be known about the serfs in Poland. At the mercy of the sudden anger and seasonable generosity of their masters, who called them louts (*Chlopy*), at least one half of the Polish peasantry literally slouched through life, with downcast eyes and backs bent with toil, too broken in spirit even to cherish bitterness.

. . . . . .

The burghers had now disappeared from most of the Polish cities, killed as a class by the restrictions the *szlachta* had imposed upon commerce. Cracow, the ancient capital of the country, had degenerated into a dull provincial town of 20,000 inhabitants at most. Grass grew in the streets of the once thriving commercial centre of Lwow; Wilna was become a bare village. The half-Germanized cities of Thorn and Dantzig, however, departed from the general rule of decay; and Warsaw shone intermittently, with a fitful activity, when the Diets brought great assemblies of nobles there with their retinues. The garish splendour of so extravagant a court as that maintained in later days by King Stanislaw II. furnished a strange contrast to the gloom and stagnation of the preceding era, when Augustus III. spent the greater part of his time in Dresden, and Warsaw was only on rare occasions a royal city.


POLAND First Partition, 1772
SWEDEN
BALTIC SEA
Riga
Dwina
SAMOGITIA
Niemen
Polock
Borodino
Moscow
Witebsk
Dnieper
Smolensk
Kaluga
Oliva
Konigsberg
Wilna
Dantzig
Wehlau
LITHUANIA
Stettin
Oder
PRUSSIA
Vistula
Minsk
Mohilew
Grodno
Thorn
MASOVIA
Desna
Posen
(Poznan)
Plock
Bug
SAXONY
Warsaw
Brzesc
Pripet
Altranstadt
Kalisz
Dresden
POLAND
Chernigoff
Lublin
Oder
SILESIA
Elbe
VOLHYNIA
RUSSIA
Vistula
Kieff
Poltava
BOHEMIA
Zolkiew
Cracow
Lwow
(Lemberg)
(Leopol)
MORAVIA
AUSTRIA
GALICIA
Bar
UKRAINA
Dnieper
Kamieniec
PODOLIA
Danube
Wagram
Tula
Pressburg
Vienna
Parkan
Chocim
Dniester
Balta
Bug
Raab
Gran
Theiss
Pruth
Stuhlweissenbg
HUNGARY

In these last days of Poland Warsaw became the paradise of all the opportunists, adventurers and impostors of Europe. The fallen nobles of France, as penniless as they were proud, came there to find sympathy; and, it might be, rich and noble wives. Such adventurers as Casanova and such cheats as Cagliostro flourished in the Polish capital. Cagliostro and his beautiful, impudent, dishonest wife left Warsaw with 20,000 ducats, cozened from the credulous nobles. The city had the glitter of a gilded coin, and was just as false. The conversation, the plays, the politics of the period were envenomed with the poison that was everywhere infecting the arts and artifices of Europe at the time. At one period, even, Warsaw might have been pre-eminently the gay city of Europe, but for the difficulty of getting there. Nowhere, even in those days, was travel so hard and unpleasant as in the kingdom of Poland. The best roads were mere cart-tracks; the best inns were dirty hovels kept by dishonest Jews. Horses and vehicles were difficult to procure, and the most hardened animals could make but little progress on the primitive highways. Even the traffic facilities afforded by the excellent rivers were largely neglected. It is not hard to understand, therefore, how the larger part of Poland was practically inaccessible to the ordinary traveller.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FIRST PARTITION

THE result of the combination of the forces of de Brühl and the Czartoryskis was to influence Augustus to a reform of the Constitution. He promised first to abolish the *Liberum veto*; and on this promise the Czartoryskis based their plans, oblivious of the strong latent opposition of the Russian and Prussian Courts. After several Diets had been dissolved by the Polish faction, led by the Potocki family, de Brühl at any rate became aware of the obstacles to the realisation of this urgent and apparently simple reform. A hitch occurred in his friendly relations with the Czartoryskis, and the latter, finding the King no longer ready to lend ear to their plans, decided that the only way to their end was his deposition. For help they turned to the Court of Russia, in apparent unconsciousness of the contemptuous indifference displayed there to any political advantage Poland could offer as a power. Summed up in a phrase, the offer of the Czartoryskis was the recognition of the Imperial title—a concession Poland was then hardly able to refuse, if Russia chose to demand.

It seems incredible that such clear-sighted statesmen should not have realised, from the simple signs of the times, the low prestige into which the internal disorders and external inactivity of Poland had brought this power, once the greatest in Northern Europe. The rights of the nation had been contemptuously ignored by all the belligerents in the Seven Years' War. Poland was made a thoroughfare and even a

battlefield by the combatant armies; and redress was not even demanded by the flaccid King and factious nobility.

None the less the Czartoryskis opened relations with Russia through the medium of their nephew Stanislaw Poniatowski, a typical product of their own educative methods. History has hardly done justice to Stanislaw Poniatowski. He was the son of a castellan or governor of Cracow, who had married a sister of August Czartoryski. His considerable abilities and his genuine patriotism were certainly to a large extent obscured by his sensual and pleasure-loving instincts and his wild extravagance. And a certain cold and cautious sanity of judgment prevented him from achieving a permanent and picturesque place among the world's leaders of forlorn hopes. Yet contemporary opinion held him highly; as a young man he won the esteem and confidence of his patriotic and far-sighted uncles, the princes Czartoryski. To his great personal attractions and the fascinating quality of his voice he doubtless owed much of the influence he wielded. "He has the most beautiful head I ever saw," wrote Count Lars von Engelström, the Swedish Minister at Warsaw. The same personal charm involved him in the many amorous adventures which helped in no small degree to his undoing.

At that period one of the ephemeral entertainments of intellectual salons was the writing of impromptu delineations of a guest's own attributes and characteristics, in emulation of the habit of self-examination so general at the time. One such delineation made by Stanislaw, probably before he had yet dreamed of royal dignity, has been preserved, and is not without interest for its curious mixture of self-depreciation and conceit.

"I should be content with my figure," this intimate document ran, "if only I were an inch taller, and my feet were a trifle better shaped, and my nose were not so much hooked, and my mouth a little smaller. With these reservations, I

believe that my face is noble and expressive, my figure not without distinction, and capable of attracting attention. My short-sightedness often makes me look awkward, but only for an instant. Indeed, I am rather apt to offend by the opposite extreme—too haughty a demeanour. An excellent education enables me to conceal my mental and bodily defects, so that many people may perhaps expect from me more than I can really give. I have wit enough to take part in any conversation, but not enough to converse long and frequently. However, my natural sympathy and amiability often come to my assistance. I have a natural *penchant* towards art. I have a quick eye for absurdities and personal defects of every description; sometimes I have even too deep a sense of them. My indolence prevents me from going as far as I should like in the arts and sciences. I work either overmuch or not at all; I can judge very well of affairs; I can see at once the fault of a plan, and the faults of him who proposes it; but I am very much in need of good counsel to carry out my own plans. I am very impressionable, but far more affected by sorrow than by joy. I am the first to be depressed, even when I have no anticipation of impending evil or good. I don't think I was born to please women; I am attracted to them by a general sympathy, but if I love, I love too passionately. . . .

"Friendship is to me a sacred thing. I would go very far to please a friend. Rather than break with him I am ready to do or suffer the uttermost. I am not pious naturally—far from it—but I venture to affirm that I love God and surrender myself to His will sincerely. I have also the flattering conviction that He loves to do good to us when we ask Him so to do. I am not vindictive. Though in the first moment of irritation I may long to avenge myself on my enemies, I am never able to carry out my desire. Compassion always comes between."

The author of this strange piece of self-revelation was

destined to undergo tests imposed upon few kings, let alone humbler men. He responded to them in a manner that revealed his sagacity rather than his devotion—amid circumstances in which superhuman sagacity might not have achieved a triumph, though self-devotion might have averted the tragedy.

. . . . . .

In 1755 Stanislaw Poniatowski had been sent to St Petersburg in the suite of the British ambassador, Sir Charles Hanbury. It was on the occasion of this visit that his distinction of appearance and intellect caught the errant eye of the Empress Catherine, then a young Grand Duchess; and he became the second of her long list of lovers. In 1757 he was appointed Polish ambassador to the Russian Court, but two years later was accused by the Empress Elizabeth of intriguing against her, and sent back to Poland. In the light of these events, therefore, it will be readily understood how the thoughts of Catherine on her accession as Empress should turn to her old lover as a ready and suitable instrument for the furtherance of designs already conceived of establishing Russian power in Poland.

The death of Augustus occurred in 1763, and Catherine at once enlisted the aid of Prussia in pursuit of her plan to put Stanislaw Poniatowski upon the vacant throne. The shameful terms of her pact with Frederick the Great—it seems hardly capable of belief or comprehension—were these:—to preserve unaltered and at any cost those fatal features of the Polish Constitution which the Czartoryskis and all the most public-spirited men in Poland were endeavouring heart and soul to abolish; namely the *Liberum veto*, and the elective system of monarchy. In ignorance of this treaty, and utterly unconscious of the perfidy already planned by Catherine and Frederick, the Czartoryskis supported the cause of Stanislaw. Among the other candidates for the throne was Xavier, the



Stanislaus Augustus, the last King of Poland.

Elector of Saxony, son of Augustus III., who had a strong following among the Polish nobles, and was also supported by Austria.

Meanwhile the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, moved partly by jealousy of Catherine and fear of Russian influence in Poland; partly by her family's traditional friendship with the house of Saxony; and partly, it must be admitted, by honest scruples and sympathies in regard to the Poles, had intervened. In a spirited manifesto she declared her resolution to maintain all the rights, prerogatives, and possessions of the Poles, particularly their privilege of appointing a sovereign by a free and voluntary election. This declaration was supported by France, in equally uncompromising terms, and the two Powers, who were then in alliance, threatened to secure the nomination of the Saxon prince by force of arms.

Catherine and Frederick retaliated by issuing a proclamation exhorting the Poles to elect none but a native for their king; and in this appeal, or rather command, were supported by Turkey. The result of the election, under the conditions of corruption and coercion effected by Russia, was never really in doubt. Catherine expended money lavishly in support of her favourite; and as an extra precaution, 15,000 Russians and as many Prussian troops were massed on the frontiers. The election Diet, meeting almost at the cannon's mouth, was overawed, and though indignant protests were made by the deputies, Catherine had her will. On September 7, 1764, Stanislaw Poniatowski was elected King, and was crowned under the title of Stanislaus Augustus.

From the outset it was obvious, to Stanislaw as to the Diet, that Russia's candidate for the throne of Poland was designed by that power to be also Russia's instrument and representative, once elected. The positive presence of Prince Repnin, the Russian minister at Warsaw, now assumed a different aspect. He was ever at the King's right hand to offer counsel that

was really coercion, to make suggestions that were accepted for—what they were meant—threats. Repnin, as the deputy to enforce the will of Catherine, now became a sinister figure in Warsaw, to overawe and dominate, no matter what diplomat or Diet, by a mere hint of the Russian army half-hidden on the frontier. Repnin, nominally Russian ambassador to Poland, became actually Russian viceroy.

Nevertheless Stanislaw chafed under the rigid and insolent guidance of Russia. He was honestly a passionate lover of Poland, and, his native vanity apart, eager to achieve his country's independence of the Russian yoke. He had no sooner been elected than he endeavoured to secure the sorely needed reforms in the Constitution proposed by the Czartoryskis. But notwithstanding his ardour, his qualities of mind and person, his numerous accomplishments, the new King had neither the enduring strength of will nor the tenacity of purpose required of him in the face of so violent and relentless opposition as was excited on the part of Russia and Prussia. His commendable efforts to re-organise the army, the finances and the law-courts of the country seemed but to provoke the irritation of Catherine and the discontent of a faction among his own subjects.

Russia's first open intervention, after the election of Stanislaw, was made on behalf of the dissidents, whom Catherine deliberately incited to insurrection. Under this denomination were comprised the Orthodox, the Lutheran, and all other Christian sects who dissented from the Roman Catholic creed. Originally, as we have seen, the dissidents had enjoyed freedom of faith and worship, representation in and membership of the Diet, and all other privileges of the Catholics; and these rights were embodied in and confirmed by the famous Treaty of Oliva. Subsequently, however, a Catholic agitation resulted in the gradual withdrawal of their privileges; and eventually, in 1733, in their total exclusion

from the Diet. Now, however, with the open encouragement of Catherine, the dissidents clamoured for the restoration of their rights, and appealed for support in this claim to Russia, Prussia, England and Denmark, as mediatory powers in the Treaty of Oliva. Russia took the side of the Orthodox, and Prussia that of the Protestants; incited them to form confederacies; and even supported their claims with a body of troops.

The national Diet of 1767 assembled under the shadow of an armed Russian force. The most obstinate and demonstratively courageous of the Catholics, among them several bishops, were imprisoned or sent to Siberia. Finally the Diet, under coercion and as a reluctant compromise, agreed to appoint a Committee to decide the points under dispute. The usual methods of bribery or bullying were employed to suborn the members of this Committee; and in the end they consented to laws not only restoring the privileges of the dissidents, but also perpetuating the *Liberum veto*, the elective monarchy, and all the other glaring and fatal anomalies of the Polish Constitution. These decisions were formally ratified at an extraordinary Diet convoked in the beginning of 1768; and at the same time a treaty was entered into between Russia and Poland whereby the former guaranteed the territorial integrity of the latter—a tacit acknowledgment of Poland's political dependence.

The acquiescence of Stanislaw and the Diet, however reluctant, in these arbitrary measures aroused immediately the indignation of the majority of the nation. A large body of Poles assembled in Podolia and seized the fortress of Bar, and there formed the confederacy afterwards known as the Confederation of Bar. The Confederation repudiated the terms of the treaty with Russia and pledged itself to restore the supremacy of the Roman Catholic faith in Poland. At first the movement seemed successful. The Russians had been

taken by surprise; and the troops of Stanislaw were either dispersed or induced to join the insurgents. Stanislaw himself, deserted by his army and his subjects alike, was left a mere impotent puppet in the hands of Russia.

The Confederates also gained the support of Austria—as a Catholic State—and accordingly Austrian troops entered Poland to support the nationalists. In October 1768, following a Russian incursion into Turkish territory in pursuit of some Polish fugitives, and the burning of the town of Balta by the pursuers, Turkey also was induced to intervene on behalf of the Confederation; and declared war on Russia in the interests of Poland. The diversion this caused threatened to develop into an European war, especially in view of French sympathies for the Polish patriots; and such a sequel was sought neither by Catherine nor by Frederick of Prussia. A combination of Turkey with Austria—Maria Theresa was already allied with France—was by no means pleasing to the Prussian king; and he sought some means to prevent it. The only expedient he could conceive in order to wean Austria from her espousal of the cause of the Polish nationalist party took the form of a considerable bribe. In November 1768, when writing his political testament, he had assumed that the acquisition of West Prussia would be left to his successor. The circumstances now caused him to change his mind, and to determine that the time was ripe for acquiring this province. He also realised that Austria must be conciliated with part of the spoil of Poland.

Early in 1769, therefore, Frederick instructed Baron Solms, the Prussian ambassador to St Petersburg, to suggest to the Empress the partial dismemberment of Poland; and to represent that Austria should have a share. "If Austria gets no part of Poland," he wrote, "all the hatred of the Poles will be turned against us. They would thus regard the Austrians as their protectors, and the latter would gain so much of

prestige and influence with them, that they would have thousands of opportunities for intrigue of all kinds in that country." He found, as he expected, that Catherine was quite in accordance with his views; but that the process of persuasion was not so easy in the case of Austria. The Empress Maria Theresa had definite scruples, and Austria had religious sympathy with the Polish patriots. Further, the Empress entertained considerable jealousy and distrust of Catherine of Russia, so that Frederick had some difficulty in silencing her qualms of conscience. After an indignant protest at the proposed partition, accompanied by a burst of passionate weeping, she ventured to yield, and her ultimate demands were proportional in extent and importance to the sacrifice of principle required of her. Already her son, the Emperor Joseph, a man of greater ambition if less scruple, had eagerly responded to Frederick's diplomatic overtures in regard to the partition. Maria Theresa finally consented, therefore, to a treaty between the three Powers, on the understanding that all were to share equally, and that for the present it was to be kept a secret.

The actual territorial acquisitions of each Power were only settled after much bitter controversy, in which the claims of Austria actually exceeded those of her accomplices in the crime so calmly and deliberately planned. Prussia took all West Prussia except the cities of Dantzig and Thorn, and their municipal territories. Russia had the Palatinates of Polock, Witebsk and Miscislaw, as far as the Dwina and the Dnieper. Austria secured part of Galicia and part of Podolia, and Little Poland as far as the Vistula. The territories differed greatly in area, but in population were, roughly speaking, about equal; they comprised quite one-fourth of the kingdom of Poland.

The partition was decided upon by all three Powers in February 1772, the terms were settled in July, but it was not until September that the three Powers thought it advisable to make them public. They then announced that they had

decided to enforce on Poland claims " as ancient as they were legitimate." Russia argued that she had not even taken all she was entitled to ; Austria advanced obsolete claims on behalf of the crowns of Bohemia and of Hungary ; and Prussia referred to the " enormous injustice " Poland had done to the House of Brandenburg. In a joint manifesto, dated September 26, 1772, they claimed that a state of anarchy existed in Poland and that they were exposed to the prospect of an entire dissolution of the kingdom. They were obliged to take steps, they declared, to secure the tranquillity of their own borders. Therefore " having communicated reciprocally their rights and claims, and being mutually convinced of the justice thereof, they were determined to secure to themselves a proportional equivalent, by taking immediate and effectual possession of such part of the republic as may serve to fix more natural and sure bonds between her and the three Powers."

The King of Poland replied with a manifesto maintaining Poland's just claim to the territory it was proposed to seize, that claim being based on actual possession for over two hundred years. He appealed to the treaties guaranteeing the integrity of his kingdom. He was bluntly ordered by Austria, through her minister at Warsaw, to summon a Diet, in order to hasten a definite arrangement between Poland and the three Powers, " who would not expose their pretensions to the hazard of future contingencies, and of those troubles with which Poland had been always agitated." The same instructions were issued by the ministers of Russia and Prussia, and the Diet was accordingly convoked and assembled on April 19, 1773. The country was practically garrisoned with the troops of the three Powers. It was very plainly intimated that if the partition were not endorsed, the whole of Poland would be divided ; and every member of the Diet was informed that he would be treated as an enemy if he did not vote for the partition. The Diet was formed into a Con-

federation, so that a majority vote could be taken, and money was freely expended in bribing its members. None the less there was a strong opposition to the partition treaty, and to the permanent Council which it sought to create for the government of the country—a council of creatures of Russia with the King at its head. Eventually, however, the Polish deputies, "without hope from abroad and without strength at home," as the historian Coxe observes, indignantly yielded to their fate. The Diet consented to the Treaty and accepted the joint guarantee of the three Powers for the future integrity of the kingdom under its old vicious Constitution. With a kind of desperate courage, that astonished even his own friends, the impotent Stanislaw obstinately refused, and swore to abdicate rather than dishonour himself by sanctioning the dismemberment of his country. He demanded asylum in England, and extending his right hand to the British minister, passionately exclaimed: "I will suffer this hand to be cut off rather than sign the Act of Partition." But his opposition was soon overcome. The same facile sentiment that rose into indignation at the fate of his nation, now subsided into fear for that of his family. He succumbed to the menaces of the Russian ambassador, and attached his signature and seal to the fatal Act that finally extinguished the name of Poland from the nations of Europe.

Once the consent to the intended partition had been extorted from the Polish Diet, the Powers prudently secured the immediate dissolution of this assembly. A committee of deputies—more or less directly nominated by the partitioners—was thereupon appointed to adjust the new frontiers of Poland and to accede to the new—or rather the old—Constitution. Before the end of September 1773, the Treaty of Partition was finally sealed, and the dismembered limbs of Poland, already tentatively occupied by the troops of their new masters, were formally surrendered to them.

CHAPTER XX

THE ACT OF REFORM

ALL the eyes that from this time turned towards Poland—whether in sympathy or in indifference—were not slow to see that the partitioning of that unhappy country had but begun. External influence and interference in Poland grew steadily greater. The undertaking to withdraw foreign troops from the mutilated country was not fulfilled; and the principal cities continued to be garrisoned by Russians. The King was a phantom ruler, a mere tool and puppet; the real master of Poland during the troubled days that followed was the ambassador of Russia.

In a few years, however, the conditions of Eastern Europe changed in a manner apparently very favourable to Poland. Frederick the Great died in 1786 and was succeeded by his incompetent nephew, Frederick William. Maria Theresa's death had already occurred, in 1780, and followed, after a short reign of ten years, by that of her son, the Emperor Joseph, who was succeeded by his brother Leopold. In 1787 Russia was again pre-occupied by a Turkish war, and Prussia was attacked by Austria, beginning a struggle which involved Sweden and the other maritime Powers. Russia, as an ally of Austria, was now opposed to Prussia, and both sides sought the support of Poland. Catherine offered another guarantee of the integrity of the kingdom, and asked permission to recruit, for use against Turkey, 30,000 troops from Polish territory. Prussia offered the same guarantee, but with her own condition.

And in Poland there was at last a genuine wave of constitutional reform. Stanislaw himself, powerless and pleasure-loving as he was, and subdued by the strong personality of Catherine, had for the first and perhaps only time in his career fearlessly asserted himself as a man and a king, and had placed himself at the head of his people. A Diet met at Warsaw on October 6, 1788 with the majority of its deputies pledged to constitutional reform, and after resolving itself into a Confederation to escape the obstacle of the *Liberum veto*, set honestly and earnestly to work. Catherine's appeal for help and offer of a guarantee were countered with a demand for the instant withdrawal of the Russian troops, and, situated as she was, she was forced to comply. Then the permanent council of Russian nominees was abolished, and the Diet considered the offer of Prussia. It was then made plain that Prussia wanted something very substantial for her help, nothing less than Dantzig and Thorn. Frederick William suggested that as compensation Poland eventually would be able to recover some of her lost territory from Austria. There was a consequent delay in dealing with the Prussian offer; and when ultimately a treaty was made it did not include the cession of Dantzig and Thorn to Prussia. This defensive treaty was signed in 1790.

In the meantime the Diet had spent two valuable years in discussing the details of the scheme of reform. There was a strong dislike manifested among the conservative *szlachta* against an hereditary monarchy, though they admitted that the periodical elections of a king had the most disturbing effect upon the country. It was also necessary to afford the cities representation on the Diets, and this the nobles found a difficult matter to concede. The two years which formed the limit for the tenure of one Diet elapsed, and nothing had been settled. New members were added without dismissing the old ones, and a double Diet was found to mean doubled eloquence and increased disputes.

Some inkling of the tendency of this Diet may be gathered from certain of its decisions. It enacted, for instance, that the principle of unanimity in voting should be abandoned. For declarations of war, treaties of peace, and political legislation a three-fourths majority should in future be accepted. For new taxes a two-thirds majority should suffice. It was also decided that no Diet should be able to authorise cession of territory. Finally, a Constitution was drawn up and a plan of action settled. On May 3, 1791, the King attended with the scheme of reform that had been prepared by a committee of patriots. The Marshal of the Diet called upon Stanislaw to prepare measures for saving the State, and he rose and proposed the Constitution. It was carried with acclamation, though twelve dissentients marked their opposition by remaining seated in silence. Then the King invited the members to accompany him to the Cathedral, and there register their oaths in support of the new Constitution.

The streets of Warsaw were crowded with citizens as the procession of patriots, with the King at their head, moved to the Cathedral. The new Constitution was adopted amid circumstances of almost tragic solemnity. At its head came the words, used on a similar occasion by the National Assembly of France: "All power in a State emanates from the will of the nation." The Act provided that after the death of Stanislaw the crown should pass to the Elector of Saxony and his heirs, male or female, thereafter; thus abolishing the elective system of monarchy. The King was to have control of the Army, and to nominate the members of the Senate and the Officers of State. All executive power was delegated to the King and a ministry of six members. The Diet of two chambers was to meet every two years, and was to include deputies from the free towns. All laws were to be approved by the King. The Liberum veto and the right of Confederation were abolished as "contrary to the spirit of the present Constitution, and

tending to trouble the State." The Roman Catholic religion was appointed as the religion of the country, but it was decided that toleration should be extended to other faiths. Some reform of the conditions of the peasants was outlined, as well as a measure of financial reform. The Army was constituted on a basis of 100,000 men.

The Constitution was approved by the vast majority of Poles. It had the support of Western Europe and of the Pope. It was greeted with enthusiasm by the most liberal statesmen in Europe. Edmund Burke, however much he hated the Revolution in France, could not but approve that in Poland. "Humanity," he wrote, "must rejoice and glory when it considers the change in Poland." It was ratified by the *sejmiki*, or local diets. And consequently, almost as a matter of course, it was the object of immediate detestation on the part of the neighbours of Poland. Catherine regarded it as a defiance of her power—as it certainly was—since Russia had twice guaranteed the Constitution it overturned, once in 1768 and again in 1775. She at once prepared to destroy it, and to take an ample revenge on Stanislaw, whom she considered to have betrayed her. But first it was necessary to free her hands from the war with Turkey, and to occupy the attention of Austria and Prussia so fully that she might pursue without disturbance her designs on Poland. Prussia's attitude to Poland had altered materially since Frederick William had so thoroughly committed himself by a defensive alliance. He had been disappointed, in the first place, at his failure to obtain the cities of Thorn and Dantzig. The prospect of a combination of the Kingdom of Poland with Saxony under one ruler was in no way pleasing to him. On the promulgation of the new Constitution his counsellors advised him to denounce the treaty, but he chose to commit himself still more deeply by congratulating Poland on "the firm and decisive conduct of the Estates, which he regards as best fitted

to give a solid foundation to the government and prosperity of Poland."

Austria had much to gain by the presence of a strong and virile Poland, acting as a buffer state between her and the two great Powers north and east of her. Austria was, moreover, sympathetic in religion to Poland. The Emperor Leopold therefore proposed a treaty with Prussia guaranteeing the integrity of the free Constitution of Poland. The two Powers were to ask the Elector to accept the succession to the throne, and the treaty was to contain a clause stipulating that no prince of the Austrian, Prussian, or Russian royal houses should ever accept the Polish throne. The Treaty of Berlin, when executed by Prussia in 1792, after a conference at Pilnitz between Leopold and Frederick William, guaranteed, not *the* free Constitution, but *a* free Constitution for Poland. Shortly afterwards Leopold died, and was succeeded by Francis II., and the Elector of Saxony returned an ambiguous and barely satisfactory answer to the offer of the Polish succession. And now Catherine succeeded in tying the hands of both Austria and Prussia. The alarm caused all over Europe by the events of the French Revolution, and the fear that its principles would spread to other European countries, was nowhere deeper-seated that in these two monarchies. The appeals of the French royal family for assistance fell upon no more sympathetic ears than those of Frederick William and Francis, and encouraged thereto by the astute Catherine, they embroiled themselves with France in a troublesome and inglorious war.

Catherine now hastened to make peace with Turkey. The Peace of Jassy, which she concluded with the Porte in 1792, left practically all her objects in Turkey unfulfilled, but it gave her a free hand to deal with Poland. At her instigation all the Polish malcontents who had taken refuge in St Petersburg after the proclamation of the Constitution of May 3rd, now

returned to Poland, and established themselves as the Confederation of Targówica. They promptly issued a manifesto deploring the anarchy into which Poland had fallen, demanding the restoration of their ancient liberties as enshrined in the old Constitution, and asking for the help of Russia. Their petition was readily granted. On April 8, 1792, Catherine gave orders to her army to invade Poland. On April 18th, Bolgaleoff, the Russian Minister at Warsaw, delivered Russia's declaration of war. In a manifesto issued to Stanislaw at the same time Catherine claimed the right and duty to intervene in the government and affairs of Poland. She complained in forcible language of the change made on the Constitution, which she described as a subversion of the ancient rights and liberty of the Poles. The manifesto further accused the Diet of countenancing disrespectful language respecting Catherine herself, and asserted the new Government to be a tyranny imposed against the wishes of the majority of the nation—the best of which had appealed to her for protection. Under these considerations, therefore, the Empress had decided to restore the ancient order of government in Poland.

Two Russian forces, comprising in all 80,000 infantry and 20,000 Cossacks, invaded the kingdom, one entering Lithuania and the other penetrating into Poland proper. The first anniversary of the reformed Constitution had hardly passed when the tramp of alien armies was again heard on Polish soil! Stanislaw gallantly exhorted the Diet to prepare to defend the system it had established; and it readily responded to the appeal. The King was entrusted with the command of the Army, and the complete control of all measures of protection. On his part he swore to defend Poland and her Constitution with his life. It was attempted, but two years too late, to increase the Army to the strength enacted in the Constitution; and, indeed, the Polish nobility, for the first

time for several hundred years, showed rare unanimity of enthusiasm in the national cause. Most of them raised detachments in their own districts and themselves furnished them with arms. Even then, however, not more than 20,000 men could be assembled to oppose the Russian army in the field. Some 30,000 others were scattered in garrisons throughout the country. Nevertheless, the Poles, under the command of Prince Joseph Poniatowski, the nephew of Stanislaw, achieved several notable successes against the enemy. But in every case they were outflanked by the greatly superior force of the Russians and compelled to retreat. One Russian army occupied Wilna, where the Confederates of Targowica were established with due ceremony.

The Diet was in despair. Prussia was appealed to, and asked to keep the pledge she had made in the treaty of 1790. Frederick William excused himself with the cynical reply that he had guaranteed the Poland of 1790, and that the treaty had been rendered null and void by the new Constitution of 1791. Stanislaw earnestly invoked the aid of Austria, France, and Great Britain, but with no more success. The Emperor Francis replied that he had no reason to oppose the wishes of Russia. France withheld assistance on the ground that the Polish revolution was organised by and on the sole behalf of the aristocracy. The British Minister at Warsaw explained that his Government could hold out to Poland no expectation of support from the maritime Powers, and that "no intervention on their part could be serviceable to Poland without much greater exertion and expense than the maintenance of their separate interests could possibly justify."

In impotent and ineffectual despair, Stanislaw appealed to Catherine on the score of their past intimacy, not so much on behalf of his own throne, which he offered to resign, but on the part of Poland. "It is important to you," he wrote on June 22nd, "to have influence in Poland, and to keep


POLAND
Partitions in 1793 and 1795.
SWEDEN
BALTIC SEA
Riga
Dwina
SAMOGITIA
Niemen
Polock
Witebsk
Borodino
Moscow
Dnieper
Smolensk
Kaluga
Konigsberg
Dantzig
Wilna
LITHUANIA
Stettin
Oder
PRUSSIA
Vistula
1795
Grodno
Minsk
Mohilew
Berlin
Thorn
POLAND
1795
Posen
(Poznan)
Plock
Bug
1793
Warsaw
Praga
Brzesc
Pripet
1793
Chernigoff
Desna
RUSSIA
Leipzig
Kalisz
Maciejowice
Pillnitz
Dresden
Pilica
Lublin
Oder
SILESIA
1795
Rawka
Dubienka
Sandomir
VOLHYNIA
Elbe
Raslawiec
Kieff
Poltava
Cracow
Lwow
(Lemberg)
BOHEMIA
AUSTRIA
GALICIA
PODOLIA
UKRAINA
Dnieper
Danube
Wagram
Vienna
Targowica
Braclaw
Theiss
Pruth
Dniester
Bug
HUNGARY
Jassy

the line of march open, whether against the Turks or against Europe. It is important to us Poles to bring to a close an endless revolution and the constant interference of our enemies. We need, moreover, a stronger and better regulated Government than we have hitherto possessed. There are means of uniting all these advantages. Give us your grandson, the Grand Duke Constantine, as our king; give us likewise an eternal alliance and an advantageous commercial treaty with your country. I will say no more: you need no instruction and no guidance."

Even this plea failed. Catherine had other designs on Poland; and, besides, this plan would provoke the bitter hostility of Prussia. She replied to Stanislaw counselling him to prove his patriotism by giving immediate support to the Confederates of Targowica. Meanwhile the Russian armies were continually advancing. On July 17th, in spite of a gallant resistance, the Polish forces, under the command of the patriot Kosciuszko—concerning whom more will be said later—were dispelled at Dubienka, on the River Bug. There was now nothing to impede the Russians' victorious advance to Warsaw.

At the advice of Stanislaw the regular national Diet, by the vote of a large majority of its members, agreed to dissolve and to recognise the rival Confederation at Targowica as the only Government of the country. The Constitution of 1791 was revoked; its notorious predecessor was re-established; and the Army was advised to yield to the Russians. The leading members of the nationalist movement, who had introduced the Act of Reform, fled to Vienna and Dresden; and only Stanislaw of them all remained, a desolate and defeated monarch, in his surrendered capital of Warsaw. He too had recognised the malcontents of Targowica, who now alone, by grace of Catherine, held the reins of government in their hands.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SECOND PARTITION

APOLOGISTS for the first partition of Poland may point, and with some degree of justification, to the numbers of Russians and Germans originally under Polish rule, to the religious disabilities inflicted upon them—though by no means more stringent, it must be admitted, than those suffered by Roman Catholics and Jews in Great Britain at the same period—and to the danger proceeding from the general anarchy into which Poland was drifting. They may be answered, in general terms, by the incontrovertible statement that the partitioning Powers imposed upon Poland the system of government from which this misrule proceeded, and, for the sinister end of spoliation, kept the unhappy kingdom in the shackles of its own evil Constitution.

But no writer of modern times has been able to contend that the second partition of Poland was anything but a monstrous crime, committed against a nation ripe with the fulfilment of the most excellent intentions of reform. "The theft of territory," declares one writer of the second partition, "is its least offensive feature. It is the forcible suppression of a national movement of reform, the hurling back into the abyss of anarchy and corruption of a people who, by incredible efforts and sacrifices, had struggled back to liberty and order, which makes this great political crime so wholly infamous. Yet here again the methods of the Russian Empress were less vile than those of the Prussian King. Catherine openly

took the risks of a bandit who attacks an enemy against whom he has a grudge; Frederick William II. came up, when the fight was over, to help pillage a victim whom he had sworn to defend."

It has already been described how Catherine induced Austria and Russia to go to war with France on behalf of the French royal family and in defence of the rights of monarchies generally. Frederick William had consented on certain conditions; and Catherine had conveyed to him her intention of effecting a further dismemberment of Poland. The old Constitution was to be restored, and if Prussia would only effect the diversion in France, Prussia should share in the spoil. Catherine deliberately planned to ignore the young Emperor Francis in the fulfilment of this scheme. Austria would declare war on France in the ultimate hope of being able to exchange the Austrian province of Belgium for the more ardently desired Kingdom of Bavaria. It must be remembered that Frederick William had not only bound himself by treaty to maintain the integrity of Poland, and congratulated the Poles on the reform of the Constitution. He had also entered into a treaty with Austria to maintain a free Constitution for Poland. Now, however, he threw all his promises to the wind, and in reality entered into the scandalous arrangement with Catherine. His perfidy was proved even more profoundly treacherous during the course of the war with France, in which he behaved with the most cynical disloyalty towards his Austrian ally.

Even before the war with France had begun there were serious differences between the allies, for Austria demanded as her indemnity that Prussia should cede Anspach and Bayreuth, as well as Bavaria, in exchange for Belgium. This Frederick William refused to do in so uncompromising a fashion as to cause considerable friction—to the malicious

joy of Catherine, who profited from every difference between her confederates. France precipitated matters by declaring war on Austria. Then Catherine denounced the Austro-Prussian treaty guaranteeing a free Constitution to Poland, and, as already related, sent two armies of conquest into the distracted kingdom. Polish resistance was overcome; King Stanislaw accepted the Confederation of Targowica; and then Frederick William showed his hand. He issued a manifesto proclaiming his intention of sending an army into Great Poland because of the growth of revolutionary doctrines there. "The principles of Jacobinism are gaining ground in that country," he declared. "The spirit of French democracy and the principles of that atrocious sect, which seeks to make proselytes on all sides, begin to take root in Poland, so that the manœuvres of the Jacobin emissaries are powerfully supported there, and there are already formed there several revolutionary clubs which make an open profession of their sentiments."

Catherine, ironically enough, made the same excuse for ignoring her treaty obligations to assist her partners in the French war. In a letter to the philosopher Grimm she wrote: "You seem to think that the Polish affair is not on the same lines as that of France. You ignore apparently the fact that the Jacobins of Warsaw are in close correspondence with those of Paris. You wish me to neglect the interests of my allies in Poland, in order to occupy myself with the Jacobinism of Paris. No! I will fight the enemy in Poland, and in so doing I shall not the less occupy myself with the affairs of France."

It should be clearly understood that from the negotiations for the second partition of Poland, Austria was totally excluded. Prussia's share of the spoil was granted as an indemnity for her losses in the war against France, which at this time (November 1792) had begun to go very badly for the

champions of monarchical principles. Austria was eventually to get a very desirable exchange, but as she was fast losing the province she proposed to barter, her position was not very secure. In the hard bargaining that had begun between Prussia and Russia, Catherine's methods were simple in the extreme; for every exaction by Prussia, she quadrupled her own demands. Frederick William desired Thorn, Dantzig, and the provinces of Posen, Kalisz and Plock, all valuable acquisitions. Russia's final share consisted of the Palatinates of Kieff, Minsk, Braclaw, and the greater part of Volhynia—a total area of 90,000 square miles, with a population of 3,000,000. Prussia took territory 15,000 square miles in extent, and with a population of from 1,000,000 to 1,500,000. The partition treaty was signed, in circumstances of the utmost secrecy, on January 23, 1793.

To enforce it Frederick William withdrew his army of the Rhine, 40,000 men in all, and at once occupied his prospective provinces; thus perpetrating a treble treachery—to Austria, to Poland, and to a recent treaty with England and Holland, the maritime Powers. On March 25th the terms of the partition treaty were made public, and Francis learned how thoroughly he had been duped. He embalmed his grievance in an autograph letter to Catherine, "I insist persistently," he wrote, "in demanding for Austria an absolute equality of acquisition and other advantages with Russia and Prussia." Cynical as ever, Catherine replied that Prussia had certainly got too much, and left him to draw his own conclusion as to the consequences to Austria.

. . . . . .

When four or five million Poles were bluntly told that in future they were to consider themselves Prussian or Russian subjects, according to the new frontiers drawn by the treaty, Poland was stricken dumb and powerless with dismay. The Confederates of Targowica showed that they had fully

trusted Catherine's guarantee of Polish integrity, and refused to call a Diet, replying that they had sworn an oath to maintain the integrity of the kingdom. Germanised though it was, the town of Dantzig alone resisted; and essayed a gallant resistance to the Prussian army. A few hours' bombardment ended the defence, however, and Frederick William was soon in possession of his booty. The two Powers now proceeded to torture their victim into acquiescence in the new dismemberment. Catherine began with the wretched Stanislaw, who by now had lost the confidence of his own people as well as the contempt of Europe. On April 23, 1793, he wrote wishing to abdicate, and was told that he had not been made a king in order that he might resign at the very time when his services were required. He must go to Grodno, where the Confederation of Targowica had now been removed, and preside over the Diet that was being convoked. And accordingly he went.

Since the Confederates had refused to summon a Diet, it became necessary to revive the old and pernicious permanent Council of State, in the pay of Russia. It was this body, therefore, under the direction of Sievers, the Russian ambassador, that arranged for the election of the Diet. The Assembly had been called at Grodno in order to be more completely subject to Russian influence and coercion. The stolen provinces were excluded from representation, and the elections were conducted by Russian staff officers, whose instructions were to "drive out all those not favourable to the matter in hand, and only admit compliant persons." Bribery was again employed, and to a considerable extent. No candidate was sanctioned who had been a member of the Warsaw Diet which had framed the Constitution of 1791. In brief, every conceivable precaution was taken, every possible means employed, to bribe or bully the Assembly into signing away one-half of the country.

The Diet of Grodno met on June 17, 1793, and the envoys of Russia and Prussia, who were in attendance, promptly presented notes, couched in each case in identical language, asking the Diet to appoint a committee to arrange treaties with Russia and Prussia ceding the stolen provinces. In return the two Powers were to give the old guarantee of integrity, and to undertake to maintain the old Constitution, with the "advantages" of the Liberum veto and elective monarchy restored. The deputies, however, while they were inclined to compliance with the demands of Catherine, were inspired with nothing but contempt and aversion for those of Prussia. To Russia, therefore, they addressed an appeal for magnanimity and justice. To Prussia they replied with a curt demand for the withdrawal of her troops from the violated provinces.

This response was hardly to the liking of Sievers, who proceeded to apply measures of coercion. He arrested seven deputies who had displayed too much independence of Russia, and confiscated the property of a number of other "malcontents," as he succinctly described them. Even now King Stanislaw might have redeemed his tarnished reputation by some demonstration of courage, however doomed to defeat. The Diet was surrounded by Russian troops, but with a leader capable of inspiring courage and confidence the deputies would have resisted to the utmost. "They want to send us to Siberia!" exclaimed one speaker, "Let them do so, the threat has no terrors for us. You, sire, conduct us, if it must be so, into Siberia. Let us go from here, where we are menaced, into those melancholy wastes. There, at least, our virtues will cover with confusion those who conspire our ruin." And at this a large number of members took up the cry "Let us go to Siberia!" But Stanislaw was ingloriously aware of the uselessness of further resistance, and after many eloquent but ineffectual protests, the Diet, by

a majority of 61 to 23, appointed a Committee to treat with Russia. On July 23, 1793 the treaty with that Power was accordingly signed, surrendering the provinces already seized by her. It was approved by the Diet, on September 2nd, "under compulsion."

In the meantime Prussia pressed very earnestly for the appointment of a similar committee, and the Diet appealed once more to the generosity of Catherine. The answer was an instruction to appoint a commitee, but was worded in such terms that the Diet felt encouraged to persist in its contumacy. It sent a message to Frederick William asking him whether, as a man of honour, he did not feel himself bound by his treaty of 1790; if so, let him at once withdraw his troops. Catherine watched the predicament of Prussia with her habitual malicious humour, and allowed the difference in the Polish attitude to both Powers to be emphasised for the benefit of an attentive Europe. At last, however, when the Poles were showing signs of too marked independence, she interfered brusquely on behalf of her partner in brigandage. Sievers received his instructions, and passed them on to the assembly at Grodno. "Any longer delay," he intimated, "and the refusal to grant full powers to delegates will be regarded as a refusal to treat, and a declaration of hostility. In that case troops will enter into military occupation of the land and dwellings of those members of the Diet who oppose the general will of the nation." And more to the same effect. But still the Diet remained unwilling to treat with Prussia.

On September 23, 1793 it was necessary to resort to sterner measures. The Diet was surrounded by Russian troops and four of its leaders were arrested and deported. The assembly demanded their liberation, protesting that they were now deprived of all freedom of speech and decision. They were told to sign the treaty, and further threats were made. An attempt to coerce them further was met by a resolution pro-

posed by the deputy for Cracow; protesting against the violation of their liberties by the Russian ambassador, and proposing complete silence as their sign of protest. Accordingly, the Assembly sat for hours in an ominous silence. It was useless for the Russian ambassador to wait for some open expression of opinion that could be tortured into a punishable offence. Against that dead wall of silence his threats fell harmless.

In the end Sievers was reduced to the expedient of declaring that their silence implied consent. On this plea the Prussian treaty was claimed to have been sanctioned, and Prussia took full and formal possession of her provinces. A last protest was signed by the helpless King and Diet. "I, the King of Poland," it ran, "enfeebled by age and sinking under the accumulated weight of so many misfortunes, and we members of the Diet, hereby declare that, being unable, even by the sacrifice of our lives, to relieve our country from the yoke of its oppressors, consign it to posterity, trusting that means may be found, at some happier period, to rescue it from oppression and slavery; such means unfortunately are not in our power, and other nations abandon us to our fate." The last indignity inflicted on the Diet of Grodno was to force it to revoke the Constitution of May 3rd, and to make a treaty which placed the poor remnant of the kingdom in more abject dependence on Russia than ever before. Russia was granted the right of sending troops into Poland, and of maintaining them there; Poland pledged herself to remain faithful to its old Constitution, and to change it in no way without the consent of Russia.

. . . . . .

Stanislaw's lament that the other nations had abandoned Poland to its fate was true; but nevertheless that neglect and desertion were almost inevitable. Catherine had known how to seize the very exceptional opportunities then existing

in Europe in order to plunder Poland without incurring the risk even of remonstrance from the Western Powers. France, engaged in a most violent internal revolution, and at the same time fighting for her national existence against Prussia and Austria, could only express sympathy. Great Britain was drawn into hostilities by the French violation of treaty rights in declaring the river Scheldt open to the navigation of all the world—an infringement of privileges secured to Holland. There was no nation with its hands free to oppose this cynical rapacity on the part of the Eastern Powers, and Poland was perforce abandoned to her fate.

Indeed France actually benefited, though indirectly, from the partition of Poland. The anxiety of Frederick William to secure his share of the spoil, and the chagrin of Francis at being so secretly and successfully excluded, caused a dissension among the allies from which France gained enormously, both in time and opportunity. It is not the purpose of this work to enter with any detail into the circumstances of the war with France. The point it is sought to make has already and admirably been made. "No one who surveys carefully the whole field of European politics, and the military movements of this time," observes Lord Eversley, in his work on the partitions of Poland, "can doubt that Poland was the salvation of France. It was the apple of discord between Austria and Prussia. It distracted the attention of both these nations from the main objective of their campaign in France. It was the cause of greed for territory being substituted for hostility to the Revolution. If Poland was the salvation of France from its enemies, who were gathered together ostensibly to overwhelm the Revolution, the Revolution in France may be said to have been the cause of the undoing and dismemberment of Poland."

Sievers, after his success in bringing the Diet of Grodno to the required degree of submission, was now relieved of his

work in Poland. Subtle and unscrupulous diplomat as he was, he was too mild-mannered a man for the events that were to follow. General Ingelström, with a garrison of 30,000 Russian soldiers, was left to represent the will of Catherine in the poor remnant of what was once the kingdom of Poland. Many ardent patriots fled the country, to wait for better days in such refuges as the Continent afforded. A good many of them gathered at Leipsic. Their eyes were turned for help to France, but France was already opposed to half the Powers of Europe, and for the next quarter of a century was preoccupied with perpetual war. But encouragement came from the French, if no help. The Polish passion for liberty was stimulated by reports of French successes in the field. The Polish temperament, Polish patriotism, Polish courage were all awakened and kept alive by the young republic's struggle for existence. The word went round that Russia was again entrapped into war with her old enemy Turkey. By exactions and indignities beyond all credence or conception, Ingelström and his soldiers were provoking the people of Poland to rebellion. "Not yet!" cried the wiser patriots and the more patient souls; "wait until the enemy is well in the toils of the war with Turkey." But the impatience of the zealots could not abide, and the order issued by Catherine for the immediate disbanding of the remains of the Polish army precipitated the revolt that in any case could not have been long delayed.

CHAPTER XXII

THE THIRD PARTITION

"THE governing classes in England in the eighteenth century," declared the Polish critic, Julian Klaczko, concerning the fall of Poland, "were perhaps even more corrupt and were certainly no better than those in our own country at the same period. Disaster after disaster came upon the English nation. America was lost, never to be recovered. Unrest was rife among the people, fomented by agitators and demagogues. The war with France incessantly exacted new sacrifices. The heir to the throne was the object of general scorn and contempt. The king was a madman. Such was the condition of England at the end of the eighteenth century. Yet only then appeared the greatness and the wisdom of her Constitution, which persisted in spite of all the terrible corruption of the aristocracy, the loss of America, the European war, the agitated public opinion, the violence of the Opposition, the dissipation of the heir-presumptive and the insanity of the king. With her own Constitution, on the other hand, and though she possessed the greatest citizens, the sublimest heroes, the most devoted patriots, Poland could hardly maintain a national existence. And when she lost these men, she fell irretrievably, unable to find in her national institutions any support, any source of strength and life, but only the fatal cause and instrument of her own fall."

With the eclipse and extinction of Poland, however, a star flashed suddenly into flame and fame that was called

Kosciuszko. Thaddeus Kosciuszko, more perhaps than any chivalrous figure in chivalric Polish history, united in his person the qualities ardently enumerated by the writer cited above. He was a great citizen, a devoted patriot, and is enshrined by his admiring countrymen as a sublime hero. Kosciuszko was born in 1740, of an old family of Lithuanian nobles. He left his country for America during the depressing reign of Augustus III., and fought with Washington in the War of Independence. He acted as aide-de-camp to La Fayette, and afterwards displayed so much military ability that he was made a Brigadier-General. He returned to Poland in 1783, and enjoyed a high reputation among his fellow-countrymen. The part he played in the resistance to Russia that preceded the second partition has already been related. He now became the life and soul of the Polish revolution.

For it was a revolution that followed the refusal of the Polish army to disband at Catherine's behest. It is quite possible that she provoked it; it is almost certain that she expected it. A brigade of Polish cavalry, under Madalinski, set fire to the parched field of Polish feeling. They not only refused to disperse, but defied dispersion. They moved on Cracow like a whirlwind; drove out the Russian garrison; and set the whole country aflame. Kosciuszko, though he bitterly lamented the premature beginning of the revolt, could not refuse the part in it accorded him by public clamour. He hastened to Cracow from Dresden, where he had been in exile, and was appointed Commander-in-Chief.

Kosciuszko had gathered more than military experience during his sojourning in America. He had learned to know and trust the people, and had gloriously demonstrated that the soul of the patriot and the courage of the warrior burned as ardently in the despised peasants of his native land as in any of the nobility. To the common people of Poland,

Kosciuszko was more than a general and a patriot; he was the man sent from heaven to lead them. He was the first Polish noble to regard the peasant as anything better than a superior brute; he wore their dress, and led them where the Polish nobles, with all the inherited military traditions of centuries, might well have blenched to follow. To them he was Father Thaddeus, the brave, constant friend who inspired their undying confidence. They swore to follow him even in the face of certain death. Many thousands of them, rude, half-barbarous, wholly courageous and passionately loyal to their leader and their country, "drank death like wine" in the bitter days that followed.

In all Kosciuszko commanded the support and confidence of the citizens, the remnants of the army, and a proportion of the squires, or lesser nobility. But the great nobles held aloof; they did not believe in the possibility of success for the revolution; and they well knew that the price of participation would be, at the very least, the confiscation of their land. They also distrusted Kosciuszko's democratic tendencies, and were alarmed at the prospect of an emancipation of their serfs. Kosciuszko's first military exploit was performed with a force one half of which was composed of peasants armed with scythe blades. The other half was the brigade of Madalinski, which had first set the revolt afoot by refusing to disarm. This force, 4000 men in all, attacked the Russian general Thomasson, who was no stronger in numbers, but was enforced with artillery. The insurgents succeeded in annihilating the Russians at Raclawiec. At this General Ingelström entered Warsaw, and attempted to disarm the populace, but after two days fierce fighting he was driven out. A provisional government was thereupon formed at Warsaw with Kosciuszko as Dictator. Wilna, the capital of Lithuania, followed Warsaw's example and drove out its Russian garrison, In Prussian Poland, too, the fire of revolt was lighted.

To free her hands, Catherine at once set about concluding the war with Turkey. In the meantime the Prussians made a determined attempt to end the rising on their own account. Frederick William deserted the cause of monarchical institutions in Western Europe to secure the final spoliation of a kingdom in the East. He had already 50,000 men in Poland, whereas the total forces of Russia and Austria combined were not more than 30,000. It seemed to offer an excellent opportunity, and he determined to conduct the military operations in person. On June 3, 1794, therefore, he joined his army near Cracow, and united with a force of 12,000 Russians under the command of General Fersen. The joint armies at Frederick William's disposal were thus 37,000 strong. Kosciuszko sallied out from Cracow with 17,000 men, more than half of them peasants with primitive weapons; and offered battle at Rawka. The result was hardly for a moment in doubt; the Poles, though they fought with desperate courage, were signally defeated. Cracow fell, and had Frederick William but moved swiftly on Warsaw, that city too had been at his mercy. The battle of Rawka was fought on June 6; yet it was July 2 before the invaders appeared before Warsaw. The interval gave Kosciuszko time to rally his forces, and to prepare a last, despairing defence of the capital.

The difficulties of Kosciuszko's dictatorship, in the meantime, had not been light. His peasant supporters had supposed that he could abolish serfdom with a stroke of the pen. His most judicious attempt to gather the more conservative section of his countrymen to the support of the national cause had involved him in unjust suspicion on all sides. The trust of the peasants was implicit, but the pessimism of the King, who nominally adhered to the provisional government, was only typical of the despair—almost amounting to indifference—general among the greater Polish nobility. He had now to defend an open city against a vastly superior force,

and his little army accordingly prepared boldly for the shock of attack. But the attack never came. Instead of storming the city, Frederick William sat down before it and proceeded to an investment planned on the latest principles of military science. In this he was artfully encouraged by the Russian General Fersen, who, on Catherine's suggestions, endeavoured to delay the capture of the city as long as possible. The plan succeeded almost beyond expectation. Posen flamed out again in open revolt, and Frederick became alarmed at the prospect of being caught between two forces of insurgents. On September 6th, therefore, he decided on the ignominious course of raising the siege.

By this time the Russians were ready to act. On August 6th they had captured the city of Wilna; and now, on September 15th, Suvaroff arrived at Brzesc, on the river Bug, with an army of 8000 men, having marched 370 miles in three weeks. Suvaroff was one of the most able, determined, and relentless of Russian generals. At Brzesc he found a Polish force of 10,000 which he attacked and almost annihilated. Then he marched straight for Warsaw. Kosciuszko went out to meet him with an army of 8000 men, but turned aside to attack Fersen, whom he hoped to account for before Suvaroff could arrive. They met at Maciejowice on October 9, 1794, but the Poles were outnumbered and outfought. Of the whole 8000 only 2000 returned to Warsaw. Kosciuszko himself had three horses killed under him, and was finally wounded and taken prisoner. The exclamation, "*Finis Poloniæ!*" attributed to him, though incorrectly, as he lay on the battlefield, does not over-exaggerate the impression made on his countrymen by Kosciuszko's defeat. His peasant-followers heard of his capture with the profoundest dismay; in many cases they abandoned their scythe-blades and fled in disorder.

It is hardly conceivable that a victory instead of a defeat at Maciejowice would have been followed by any other con-

sequences for the Polish cause, or would have affected anything but a delay of the inevitable débâcle. The tragedy of this disaster on the Bug, however, is only intensified by the tragic fact that contributed to and perhaps caused it. The Polish General Poninski, whom Kosciuszko had urgently summoned to his aid, was an inveterate gambler. He was playing cards when the first courier brought the earnest request for reinforcements. He continued to play. When at last he gave his army the order to march, it was already too late. The battle was lost while the reinforcements were on the road.

Poland made one other, an even more desperate, stand for freedom. Suvaroff appeared before Warsaw, and attacked the suburb of Praga. "Warsaw shall cease to exist!" he had promised in a letter to the Prussian General Schwerin. "To see the insurgents wandering on the bank, to annihilate them, and to plant the standard of the mighty Empress as a fearful warning to the faithless city—that is my object." The capital was defended by Generals Dombrowski and Madalinski, and the most desperate gallantry was displayed. In Praga there were but 8000 trained soldiers in all, and some 3800 citizen volunteers. The assault was begun in the early hours of November 5th. By noon the suburb of Praga had been taken. By November 7th Warsaw itself had capitulated. Then followed the riot of ruthless and unreasoning massacre which opened the most bitter era of blood and tears in Polish, or indeed in any, history. The victorious Russian troops had evil memories of their previous expulsion from the Polish capital, when they suffered heavily from the insurgents. They now began indiscriminately to butcher all whom they found in the streets of the surrendered city. Soldiers and citizens, old men, women, and children were slaughtered alike. The streets of Warsaw ran with blood like a shambles. Ten thousand lay dead in them; 2000 more were driven into the river and drowned. In ten days from the fall of



The Market Place, Warsaw.

Warsaw the flame of revolt in Poland was utterly quenched. Dombrowski, Madalinski, Potocki, and other patriots who had laid down their arms, were sent in captivity to St Petersburg, where Kosciuszko was already confined.

. . . . . .

By thus seizing Warsaw, almost under the nose of her Prussian rival, Catherine had considerably strengthened her hand in the game of intrigue and bargaining that now began. With the first news of the rising she had resolved to make an end of Poland. Now her one concern was to yield as little as possible of the victim to her partners, and especially to Prussia. At the second partition Austria had been duped and befooled with a hypothetical exchange of Bavaria for the province of Belgium, which she had since lost in the French war. Catherine now made an excuse out of his conduct in the same French war, for denying Frederick William what he conceived to be his share of the residue of Poland. And indeed, the behaviour of Prussia to her allies in that adventure against France does not survive with success any close scrutiny. Frederick William had paltered with Austria; he had accepted subsidies from Great Britain on condition that he should put an army of 60,000 men in the field, and had neglected to fill his share of the bargain; he had run away from the field of war to conduct operations against the Poles; and, finally, he made a separate peace with France in defiance of all his treaty obligations. Catherine did well to remind him that he lacked somewhat in good faith. In one letter she declared: "The Empress thinks that Prussia's renown is engaged in the French war; she thinks that Prussia ought not to show herself so dependent on English money; and she sees how right she was not to place any Russian troops at the disposal of so inharmonious a coalition."

Long before Warsaw had fallen the three Powers began to discuss the division of the remainder of Poland. On July

23rd Catherine had written that the fate of Poland should be settled by an arrangement made by the three Powers; and Frederick William, then confidently engaged in the siege of Warsaw, had outlined his own demands. He wanted all the country between the Vistula, Silesia and West Prussia; and he instructed his ambassador at St Petersburg, Tauenzein, to advance these claims by offering to set aside small principalities for Zuboff, then Catherine's favourite, and for Nassau-Siege, the Russian Ambassador at Berlin. In other words, Austria was again to be excluded from participation in plunder. When the real time for discussing a partition arrived, Prussia was not in so strong a position as her King had fondly hoped when he formulated these demands; but he certainly held possession of Cracow and the Palatinate of Sandomir, the territory most desired by Austria. Unfortunately for him, Catherine had already independently come to terms with Austria, and nothing that he could do would turn her from them. On October 30th she intimated to Tauenzein that Cracow and Sandomir must be given up to Austria; while she herself would be content with the territory north of the Vistula and the Bug. Thus Prussia would receive Warsaw and the territory south of the Vistula.

Frederick William insisted on retaining Cracow, however, and a conference was accordingly arranged at St Petersburg to discuss the matter. There Tauenzein found himself in a minority. Ostermann, the Russian Chancellor, and Coblenz, the Austrian Ambassador, made common cause against him. He protested that Prussia would never give up possession of Cracow, and that the only alternative to a withdrawal of the Austrian demand was to leave Poland *in statu quo*. Then there was talk between the other two of a treaty from which Prussia might be excluded altogether, if she did not choose to subscribe to it. The Conference ended there, without the semblance of an agreement. The separate arrangement

with Austria thus threatened Catherine thereupon proceeded to make. On January 3, 1795, a treaty was signed between the two Powers relating to Poland, and another dealing with their future relations. The preamble to the Polish treaty declared "that Poland having been entirely subjected and conquered by the arms of the Empress of Russia, she has determined to arrange with her Allies for a complete partition of that State, which has shown an absolute incapacity to form a government which will enable it to live peaceably under the laws or to maintain itself in independence."

Russia was accordingly to take the territory between the rivers Vistula, Bug and Pilica, with a population of about 1,250,000; Austria was to have Cracow and the Palatinates of Sandomir and Lublin; and Prussia was to be offered the remainder, with the city of Warsaw, if she chose to take it. Each of the Powers guaranteed the possessions of the others. This treaty, like the others, was secret. On the instructions of Catherine, her Chancellor now wrote an acid letter to Frederick William, exposing the futility of his suggestion that Poland could be retained on the old footing. "We may boldly affirm," he declared, "that the title of the Empress to her portion of Poland is not the work of a moment or of chance, but the creation of thirty years of labour, cares, and colossal efforts of every kind; we may affirm that, in comparison with these Austria and Prussia have received as an unbought gift all the advantages which they have received and will receive in Poland." Reading between the lines of this letter, it was not difficult for the King of Prussia to see that his previous experience over Poland had now been reversed; that whereas in the second partition he had participated in a bargain at the expense of Austria, it was now his turn to be left in the cold.

It was in these circumstances that Frederick William concluded the negotiations which he had initiated for a

separate peace with France—a step which aroused the Empress to extraordinary indignation. She at once concerted steps with Austria for the ejection of the Prussians from Cracow, and no time was lost in putting them into operation. She sent a large number of troops into Poland, and at her instigation the Austrians massed 80,000 men on the Bohemian frontier. The terms of the treaty of January 3rd were communicated to Berlin, and Prussia was coldly invited to agree to them. On September 3rd a further conference was held at St Petersburg, and there Austria consented to yield a small strip of territory between the Vistula and the Bug; and with this Prussia had to be content. On October 29th the latter Power signed the third partition treaty. Prussian troops were withdrawn from Cracow and Sandomir, and the Russians handed over Warsaw to Prussia. One condition of the division was that the three powers, "recognising the necessity of abolishing everything which may recall the memory of the existence of a kingdom of Poland," pledged themselves to refrain from using that title. The total territorial gains of Russia from the three partitions constituted an area of 181,000 square miles, with a population of some 6,000,000; Austria's share was 45,000 square miles in extent, with 3,000,000 new subjects; Prussia's new territory was 57,000 square miles in area, and its population 2,500,000.

. . . . . .

Catherine did not long survive the completion of the ruin of Poland, for she died on November 16, 1796. Her victim Stanislaw, the last King of Poland, was forced to abdicate on November 25, 1795. It was provided that his debts should be paid, and that he should enjoy a considerable pension, which was contributed by the three Powers which had profited so greatly from his incompetence. He went to live in St Petersburg after the death of Catherine, and died in that city in 1798. Catherine's death called to the throne

of Russia the Czar Paul, who showed some sympathy for the Poles. He actually released some 12,000 of them from their Siberian exile, and generously repatriated them. He visited the patriot Kosciuszko in his prison, and embraced him; then liberated him with due honour and ceremony. Kosciuszko afterwards travelled, and was received with acclamation both in Great Britain and America; eventually he took up his abode in Switzerland. During the Polish enthusiasm for Napoleon he was invited to return to Poland and take part in the affairs of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. But he wisely shook his head. "The Poles," he said, "have enough despotism at home, without going so far to purchase the price of their blood." The Emperor Alexander also wrote to him, when he was busy in re-establishing the kingdom of Poland, a letter as honourable to the writer as to him who received it. But Kosciuszko never saw his native soil again; he died in Switzerland in 1817.

It is a matter of considerable difficulty, even after this long interval, to apportion with justice the immeasurable guilt for the inglorious conspiracies, quarrels, cruelty and criminality that constituted the partitions of Poland. Where each was almost incredibly infamous, it is difficult to accord degrees in infamy—either to one or other of the three despoilers of Poland. Nevertheless the supreme guilt, perfidy and callousness of Prussia, as demonstrated during the whole period of the partition, seem at once conclusive, consummate and incontestable. The policy and actions of Russia, hardly less unjust, cruel or criminal though they were, were at least redeemed by the quality of an unabashed and almost brutal candour. "Russia," observes Lord Eversley, "was all along, and had been for years past, the open and declared enemy of Poland. There was no secrecy in her policy. The Empress Catherine carried out the designs of Peter the Great, and for thirty years was engaged in the avowed task of sub-

jecting and dismembering her unfortunate neighbour. . . . However much we may condemn the public morality of Catherine's actions, it is impossible not to accord a tribute of amazement to the skill with which she pursued her objects. . . .

"With Prussia it was very different. Her course throughout these transactions was pursued with underhand perfidy, treachery, lying and fraud, without example or precedent in history. . . . Whatever excuses may be urged for Frederick, no plea can possibly be urged on behalf of his successor, Frederick William, in abatement of his perfidies. In drawing Poland away from alliance with Russia, entering into a treaty, offensive and defensive, with her, promising support to her new Constitution, and then, when the ink of his treaty was hardly dry, turning round and throwing over all his treaty obligations, and agreeing with Russia to dismember Poland, his course was perfidious and disgraceful to a degree almost incredible. . . . We may affirm that at the bar of history the destruction of the Polish kingdom, and the partition of its territory, were political crimes of the gravest kind, unequalled in the past of Europe. In apportioning the blame for them, we are justified in the conclusion that the conduct of Prussia was the most perfidious and mendacious, that of Russia the most cunning and deadly, and that of Austria the most mean and treacherous."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GRAND DUCHY OF WARSAW

"WHEN Freedom goes out of a place," cried Walt Whitman, "it is not the first thing nor the second thing to go; it is the last. All others go before it." Poland had been blotted out from the map of Europe, but there remained 11,000,000 Poles, ashamed and grieved at their loss of a national existence. They looked around for help, and no help was in sight, except it should come from France. Thousands of Poles had volunteered to serve in the army of the struggling Republic, but the French law of the time did not permit their enrolment. They were able, however, to give their services to Lombardy against Austria, and fought hard and bravely against at least one of the despoilers of Poland.

When Napoleon was proclaimed First Consul, an alteration in the law of France permitted the enlistment of foreign soldiers, and the Polish Legion of the French Army became an accomplished fact. Poland was made a French recruiting-ground, and in spite of its heavy losses, the Polish Legion was maintained at full strength. At the time of the peace of Lunéville, made between Austria and France in 1801, there remained 15,000 members of the Legion, and these were despatched by Napoleon to St Domingo, in the West Indies, to suppress the revolt headed there by that extraordinary negro Toussaint l'Ouverture. Thus the aspirants for freedom were employed, however reluctantly, in an effort to crush a kindred movement. Their fate was a melancholy one.

Unable to resist the ravages of yellow fever, they died in thousands, and only a wretched and disease-racked handful returned to tell the tale.

The Poles had more cause for hope and courage in 1806, when war broke out between France and Prussia, and Napoleon carried the operations into Prussia itself. The battle of Jena, on October 14, 1806, provoked a revolt in Prussian Poland; the patriots were joined by a force of Lithuanians, and the Prussians were driven from the country. Napoleon entered Posen in triumph, and was received with enthusiasm by the Poles. Hopes were formed of a new national existence for the dismembered kingdom.

But Napoleon had no Polish policy; he was concerned with affairs much nearer to himself. He issued a vague and evasive proclamation, suggesting that Poland was on the eve of a new birth. "Shall the throne of Poland," he asked, "be re-established, and shall this great nation resume its existence and independence? Shall it spring from the abyss of the tomb to life again?" But the only answer he could supply for this self-asked question was bitterly disappointing: "God only, who holds in His hands the issues of all events, is the Arbiter of this great political problem; but certainly there never was a more memorable or a more interesting event." Napoleon succeeded in driving the Prussians out of Poland, and on January 14, 1807, after the battle of Poltusk, his army entered Warsaw in triumph. Then war broke out with Russia.

It was now, if he had ever intended to consider the aspirations of the unfortunate Poles and the future of the destroyed kingdom, that Napoleon might have restored Poland and given it a new lease of life. But now, as afterwards, he played for his own hand only, and made haste to conclude peace with Russia. On June 14, 1807, he defeated the Russians at Friedland, and made peace with Russia and Prussia immedi-

ately after. By the terms of the Treaty of Tilsit Prussia was allowed to retain West Prussia, and the provinces of Posen and Warsaw were constituted a Grand Duchy, with the Elector of Saxony as its Grand Duke. The new Grand Duchy of Warsaw, as it was called, had a population of about 3,000,000 inhabitants. It was, however, a mere appanage of France. After his custom, Napoleon provided a liberal Constitution, freed the serfs, established the Code Napoléon with its severe but equal justice for all, and provided for an administration of Polish ministers, and a Diet elected on open and equitable conditions. In 1809 Napoleon was again at war with Austria, and in that year the Grand Duchy was invaded by an Austrian army of 30,000 men under the Archduke Frederick, who captured Warsaw. In return Joseph Poniatowski, the Commander-in-chief of the army of the Duchy, and one of Napoleon's most redoubtable marshals, invaded Austrian Poland, called a Polish revolt in Galicia, and drove the Austrians out of their Polish provinces, as well as drawing them away from Warsaw. On July 6th, Napoleon inflicted on Austria the crushing defeat of Wagram, and again peace was made. By the Treaty of Vienna part of Austrian Poland —about two-thirds of Galicia—was incorporated with the Grand Duchy; the remainder of this province was handed over to Russia.

. . . . . .

The history of the Grand Duchy during the remaining five years of its existence bears much resemblance to that of all the other kingdoms and principalities set up by Napoleon. The nobles and wealthy classes complained of the exactions of the government, the poorer subjects had not time fully to appreciate the even-handed justice administered under the Code. New works were initiated—such as roads and bridges —the benefit of which could not for some time be felt, though the cost of their instruction impoverished the whole people.

The able-bodied men of the country were constantly called upon for service in one or other of Napoleon's innumerable armies or expeditions, and industry was paralysed by war.

And yet, as in Italy, Napoleon left behind him in Poland a lasting memory of the blessings of freedom and equity. The poverty of Poland was extreme; she had neither the time nor the opportunity yet to recover from the centuries of repression under which the peasantry and the burgher-classes had groaned. But the French era left its indelible mark on the people. In spite of their several disappointments the hopes of the Poles were raised to the highest pitch by Napoleon's last great war with Russia, and the invasion of the Grande Armée. He made every bid for Polish support, and announced his intention of restoring to Poland her full territory and ancient privileges. At the same time, however, he had entered into a secret treaty with the Emperor of Austria, disposing of Galicia, and otherwise stultifying his promises to the Poles. But they were not aware of this. They disregarded a proclamation of the Czar guaranteeing the autonomy of Lithuania, and rallied to the cause of the French.

Napoleon was invariably majestic in promise. A meeting of the Diet was addressed at Warsaw by the French ambassador, who encouraged the Poles to hope for the fullest measure of national life. An army of 80,000 Poles thereupon assembled, and marched on Moscow with the Grande Armée. In Lithuania Napoleon could not succeed in arousing the same enthusiasm as in his own Duchy of Warsaw. The Lithuanians unfavourably compared his windy and unsubstantial promises with the clear-cut offer of autonomy made by the Czar Alexander. Napoleon actually treated Lithuania from his entrance into the province as hostile territory; and his army's progress through the country was accompanied by all the devastation of war.

The French army entered Wilna, the capital, on June 9, 1812, and a deputation from the Diet presented to Napoleon an address of welcome drafted by himself. His reply on this occasion was even less satisfactory than before. "In my situation," he said, "I have many interests to conciliate and many duties to perform. If I had reigned at the time of the first, second, or third partitions of Poland, I would have armed all my people to support you. I love your nation. During the last sixteen years I have seen your soldiers at my side in the fields of Italy, as well as those of Spain. I applaud all that you have done; I will do everything in my power to second your resolutions. . . . I have always used the same language since my first appearance in Poland. I must add here that I have guaranteed Austria the integrity of her States, and that I cannot authorise any design or step that may tend to disturb her in the peaceable possession of the Polish provinces which remain under her power." Let Lithuania, Samogitia, Witebsk, Polock, Mohilew, Volhynia, the Ukraina, and Podolia be animated with the same spirit which I have witnessed in Great Poland, and Providence will crown with success the purity of your cause, and will reward the devotion to your country, which has so much interested me in your behalf, and has given you so many claims to my esteem and protection, on which you may depend under all circumstances."

Napoleon's Polish Volunteers, under Poniatowski, fought with the utmost courage. They formed the fifth corp of the Grande Armée and distinguished themselves at the battles of Smolensk, Borodino, Kalouga and elsewhere. They suffered most in the disastrous defeat that followed, and of the total 80,000 not more than 3000 returned to Poland. The Russians captured Warsaw; the Grand Duchy was extinguished; and the Czar took possession of its territories. Nevertheless Poniatowski, who remained faithful to Napoleon,

succeeded in raising a fresh Polish force of some 15,000 men, who fought in all his succeeding campaigns. The remainder of them were even present at Waterloo. But before then they had lost their courageous and resourceful leader, Poniatowski, who died after the disaster of Leipsic, and only four days after he had received his baton as a Maréchal de France. In the retreat after the battle the bridge over the river Elster had been blown up, leaving the main body of the Poles on the wrong side. Many of them attempted to escape by swimming the stream, and Poniatowski was drowned. It is believed that he desired death, and found it in this fashion. "God," he is said to have exclaimed, "has given the honour of the Poles into my keeping, and only unto God will I give it up!"

. . . . . .

The whole of Poland was now in the hands of Russia, including both the Austrian and the Prussian provinces. The Czar Alexander lost no time in making it known that his intentions towards the Poles were of the most generous nature. In April 9, 1814, the veteran Kosciuszko made the following appeal to Alexander on behalf of his countrymen:

> "I request three favours of you: the first is to grant a general amnesty to the Poles without any restriction, and that the serfs scattered in foreign countries may be regarded as free if they return to their homes; the second, that your Majesty will proclaim yourself King of Poland, with a free Constitution approaching that of England, and that you cause schools to be established there for the instruction of the serfs; that their servitude be abolished at the end of ten years, and that they may enjoy the full possession of their property. If my prayers are granted, I will go in person (ill though I am) to throw myself at your Majesty's feet to thank



Prince Joseph Poniatowski.

By Vanchelet. At Versailles.

you, and to be the first to render homage to my sovereign."

To this the Emperor replied in the following autograph letter:

"I feel great satisfaction, General, in answering your letter. Your wishes shall be accomplished with the help of the Almighty! I trust to realise the regeneration of the brave and respectable nation to which you belong. I have made a solemn engagement, and its welfare has always occupied my thoughts. . . . How satisfactory it would be to me, General, to see you my helpmate in the accomplishment of these salutary labours! Your name, your character, your talents, will be my best support."

Alexander accordingly offered the Polish remnant of the Grande Armée a choice between serving Russia and disbanding. To a deputation from Lithuania, in July 1814, he declared that all the past was forgotten and forgiven, and that the future of Poland would be his peculiar care. In fulfilment of his promises, he went to the Congress of Vienna accompanied by Prince Adam Czartoryski, the most eminent Pole of the day. In consideration of the events that followed it is curious to reflect that the chief hindrance to the generous intentions of the Czar really lay in the attitude of Great Britain. This attitude, one of unpardonable short-sightedness, was due in a large measure to the invincible stupidity of Lord Liverpool, and of the British representative at the Congress, Lord Castlereagh. Liverpool began by assuming that it would be impossible to obtain autonomy for Poland, though the whole of it was already in the hands of the Czar, who was set on retaining it for the Poles. Castlereagh's literal interpretation of a memorandum from Liverpool on the subject completed the confusion. The memorandum, drafted for Castlereagh's guidance, ran as follows:—

"There can be no doubt that the restoration of the Kingdom of Poland, such as it was in the year 1792, under an hereditary, independent and limited monarchy, would be the measure most just in itself, and most satisfactory to the people of this country.

"Have we any right, however, to call upon Russia, Austria, and Prussia to give up those provinces of Poland which they have annexed to their own dominions, and which continue to form part of them? Certainly not. We may recommend it, but we can do no more. For however unjust the partition of Poland may have been, if from consideration of prudence we either found it impracticable, or did not deem it expedient to oppose them at the time they were made, we can have no right at the distance of five, ten, or twenty years, to require of the above-named Powers to dismember the provinces which they then annexed, and which formed part of their dominions during a period in which we were at peace with all of them, and in alliance with some of them.

"The only portion, therefore, of ancient Poland about whose fate we have now a right to take a decisive part is the Duchy of Warsaw. The fate of that Duchy is *sub judice.*

"It is obvious that an arrangement may be made with respect to the Duchy of Warsaw upon either of the three following principles:

"(1) It may be divided between the three great Powers, and so made to constitute a part of each of their dominions.

"(2) It may be preserved as an independent State under an independent Prince.

"(3) It may be assigned to one of the three great Powers as an independent State, which under the present circumstances must be Russia."

In conclusion Lord Liverpool expressed the opinion that


DUCHY OF WARSAW
BALTIC SEA
SAMOGITIA
Niemen
Tilsit
Konigsberg
Wilna
LITHUANIA
Dantzig
Friedland
PRUSSIA
RUSSIA
Grodno
Elbe
Stettin
Oder
Vistula
Thorn
DUCHY
Pultusk
Plock
Bug
Praga
Posen
(Poznan)
OF
Warsaw
Brzesc
CONFEDERATION
OF
THE
RHINE
Warta
WARSAW
Pripet
Kalisz
Pilica
Leipzig
Lublin
Elster
SAXONY
Jena
Dresden
Oder
SILESIA
Sandomir
VOLHYNIA
Bug
Vistula
Elbe
AUSTRIA
MORAVIA
Cracow
GALICIA
Lwow
(Lemberg)
HUNGARY
Danube

the third of these methods was most to the interest of Europe. This memorandum wilfully ignored the existing circumstances, to which the Czar very forcibly called the attention of the Congress. He held all Poland in his hands, and all Saxony too. He was minded to constitute ethnographical Poland—or that part of the original kingdom which was actually inhabited by Poles—into an autonomous kingdom under the suzerainty of Russia. Prussia he proposed to compensate by the gift of Saxony; but Austria was to get nothing. "I will not give Austria a village," he declared. Castlereagh supported the objections of Austria; and Talleyrand, out of pure malice, supported Great Britain on behalf of France. Nevertheless Alexander stood firm. He ordered the surrender of Saxony to Prussia, and took steps to have himself proclaimed at Warsaw as King of Poland. But a secret treaty, to which all the Powers at the Congress except Prussia and Russia subscribed, was made to prevent this. Europe seemed on the brink of another great war; and at last the pressure became so great that Alexander yielded. Thus it befell that Poland was again divided.

Austria regained all Galicia with the sole exception of the province of Cracow, which was established as an independent republic, guaranteed by the Powers. Dantzig, Thorn, and the province of Posen were restored to Prussia, which also took part of Saxony in recompense for Warsaw. Russia took the rest of the Grand Duchy, which she undertook to maintain as an independent kingdom. Each of the three Powers guaranteed to the Poles the preservation of their autonomous institutions, and respect for their rights of free assembly, worship, and speech—a pledge confirmed by all the Powers concerned in the Congress. There seems to have been no doubt in the minds of the delegates that this promise was clear and unequivocal. Castlereagh took occasion to emphasize it when he returned to London, and explained to Parliament

the result of his labours. "The main object of conciliating the Poles," he said, "will not be lost sight of. They will be relieved from the local difficulties and personal disqualifications under which they have hitherto laboured. Whatever system of policy may have formerly existed, the Poles will now be governed as Poles."

However this may have been, it is incontrovertible that when the chance was offered of uniting all the people of Polish nationality under one autonomous rule, the craft of Metternich, the malice of Talleyrand, and the incurable stupidity of Liverpool and Castlereagh caused it to be thrown away. The Poles were now split into four sections: those ruled by Austria; those ruled by Prussia; those of Lithuania and the other parts of Poland now incorporated with Russia; and those who inhabited the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. The Treaty of Vienna was signed on June 11, 1815, a few days before the battle of Waterloo. Its provision for the Poles was worded as follows:—

> "The Poles who are respectively subjects of Russia, Austria, and Prussia shall obtain a Representation and National Constitution regulated according to the degree of political consideration that each Government to which they belong shall judge expedient and proper to give them."

The Duchy of Warsaw was incorporated as a kingdom under the suzerainty of the Czar; and its future was rigidly defined in the following clause:—

> "The Duchy of Warsaw, with the exception of the provinces which are otherwise disposed of, is united to the Russian Empire. It shall be irrevocably attached to it by its Constitution; and be possessed by His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, his heirs and

successors in perpetuity. 'His Imperial Majesty reserves to himself to give to this State enjoying a distinct administration the interior improvements which he shall think proper. He shall assume with his other titles that of Czar, King of Poland."

There can be no doubt of the interpretation put by the Czar upon the first of these clauses. He firmly believed that the Congress had provided some measure of autonomy for all the Polish nation. He plainly indicated as much in a letter he addressed to the Senate at Warsaw. "The Kingdom of Poland," he wrote, "will be united with Russia by the bond of its own Constitution. If the great interests of general tranquillity have not permitted the union of all the Poles under the same sceptre, I have at least endeavoured to alleviate as much as possible the pain of separation, and to obtain for them everywhere the peaceful enjoyment of their nationality."

In the same sense the treaty was interpreted by the King of Prussia, whose proclamation to the people of Posen ran as follows: "Inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Posen, you are incorporated with my monarchy, but without being obliged to renounce your nationality. You will participate in the Constitution which I intend to give to my faithful subjects, and you will have a provincial Constitution like the other provinces of my kingdom. Your religion shall be maintained. Your personal rights and your property shall remain under the protection of the laws upon which you will also be called upon in future to deliberate. Your language shall be used with the German in all public transactions, and every one of you, according to his abilities, shall be eligible to public appointment in the Grand Duchy and to all the offices and dignities in my kingdom."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CZAR AS KING

A NEW era began in Polish history when the Czar Alexander of Russia entered Warsaw in November 1815. He was received with acclamation by the people of the city, whose hopes had been raised by the attitude he adopted at the Congress of Vienna. The promised Constitution for Poland was drawn up by Prince Adam Czartoryski, who enjoyed the close friendship of Alexander, and was accepted by the latter, who permitted, however, certain modifications introduced by Novosiltsoff, a reactionary and ambitious Russian, who now took an increasingly active interest in Polish affairs.

The Constitution was signed on November 27, 1815. It provided for an hereditary monarchy, the crown to be the unalienable possession of the Russian royal family. The person of the monarch was sacred and inviolable, and the government was vested in him. He had the power of summoning, dissolving, or adjourning the Diet, and confirming or rejecting its enactments. The Diet should consist of a House of Deputies of 128 members, of whom seventy-seven were elected by nobles only; and fifty-one were elected by the burghers and other classes of the community on a limited franchise. This franchise included all owners of land paying taxes; all master workmen, manufacturers, and merchants with a certain property qualification; and parish priests, vicars, and professional men. The members were elected for six years; the Diet was to be summoned every two years

and to sit for thirty days. A simple majority was sufficient to make its decisions valid.

The Senate should consist of half as many members as the House of Deputies. These held their appointments for life, on the nomination of the Crown. The Ministry was composed of five members; the Ministers for Finance, War, Education, Home Affairs, and Justice; and the Viceroy presided over its meetings.

The Roman Catholic faith, though not recognised as the official State religion, was to receive the special protection of the government. The army was constituted on a peace footing of 30,000. The Polish language was to be used in the affairs of administration, law, and the army. Personal liberty, religious tolerance, and the freedom of the Press were guaranteed.

Such was the liberal Constitution drawn up by Prince Adam Czartoryski—a Constitution perpetuating the Polish nationality and the Polish language; and a full and complete realisation of the promises made by the Czar. But it was revised by the reactionary Novosiltsoff, who riddled it with textual loop-holes that were afterwards used to infringe the rights which the Constitution was intended to embody. For instance, the old clause of the Polish Constitution which read, "We will imprison no one, save by law," was altered to "We permit no one to be imprisoned"; and this alteration afterwards availed the Viceroy in his illegal arrests and long imprisonments without trial. Similarly the financial clauses were so mutilated that no budget was actually presented during the whole of the fifteen years in which the Polish Constitution was operative. The right of adjourning the Diet was similarly misused.

It was generally expected in Poland that Prince Adam Czartoryski would become the first viceroy, but an unfortunate misunderstanding occurred at this time in his intimacy with the Czar, and the appointment was given to General Zaionczek.

Zaionczek, though himself a Pole, proved but a tool in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Constantine, who was a man of over-bearing temper, arbitrary disposition, and the most reactionary and illiberal instincts. Worse still, he was ill-disposed towards Poland. Even more unfortunate, however, was the attachment of Novosiltsoff in some mysterious capacity to the Polish administration. Ostensibly he was only a member of the Administrative Council, but it was afterwards apparent that from the very first he had been the evil genius of Poland. It is indubitable that his reports on Polish affairs, furnished first to Alexander, and afterwards to his successor, Nicholas, were inspired by nothing but malice and mendacity.

The new kingdom of Poland had an area of about one-sixth that of the original Poland, and a population of 3,200,000 in 1815; by 1830 the latter had increased to 4,000,000. It was constituted of eight provinces: Masovia, Plock, Kalisz, Sandomir, Lublin, Podolia, Augustow, and Cracow; the last province being so called in the expectation that some day the city of that name should be added to the kingdom. The Church had eight similar dioceses, the Primate being the Archbishop of Warsaw. After the death of Archbishop Woronicz in 1829, however, no successor was appointed for many years. Administration began favourably and without much difficulty. True to their traditions, the Poles paid great attention to education and the arts. The University of Warsaw was founded with the most modern equipment and on the most modern principles; and the country was endowed with good schools, well distributed. Music and the drama were subsidised; good roads were made; and Warsaw itself was improved by the erection of some very beautiful buildings, and the removal of some very bad ones. Mining was renewed under less primitive conditions; industries were established; the navigation of the great

rivers was improved, and new facilities for traffic were provided.

The hope and ambition of the nation, as manifested both in the new kingdom and in Lithuania, was that the latter provinces should be incorporated under the new Constitution; and this hope was encouraged by the Czar himself. In 1818 he opened the first Diet at Warsaw, his speech on this occasion was generous, friendly, and optimistic, though it said nothing definite concerning the future of Lithuania. "Your hopes and my wishes are being realised," he said. "You have given me the opportunity of disclosing to my own country that which I have long been preparing for it, and which it will obtain as soon as this important work can reach maturity. You have proved yourselves equal to your task. The result of your labours will teach me whether, true to my undertaking, I shall be able further to extend what I have already done for you."

The finances of the new kingdom were weak; and the modest revenue received by the State was almost all dissipated on the army, the expense of which was very considerable. But in this and in other questions that came before it for discussion and decision the new Diet acted with remarkable firmness and fidelity to the principle of the new Constitution, and among the earliest and most useful measures it passed were the Land Laws and the Criminal Code—all of which, however, succeeded in arousing the resentment of the Grand Duke Constantine and Novosiltsoff. Serious friction soon arose among the army, as a consequence of the severe discipline imposed by Constantine. Vielhorski, the highly-respected Minister for War, handed in his resignation; and many Polish officers were even constrained to commit suicide rather than submit to the indignities offered them. Nevertheless, the Poles still entertained hopes of the ultimate incorporation of Lithuania in the kingdom, and their aspirations

were at this time encouraged by the extension of the military authority of Constantine over five Lithuanian provinces.

But 1819 saw the inevitable reaction. In that year a censorship of all Polish newspapers and periodicals was begun; by May it had become more rigorous; and in July it was extended to books. The Diet assembled in the following September, and at its opening the Czar, in a speech of vague import, referred ominously to the "evil spirit which was moving over Europe." The Diet rejected the measures proposed by Constantine, and was dissolved. In his speech of dismissal the Czar told them: "You have delayed in its progress the work of restoring your country. That heavy responsibility will rest upon you." For five years, from 1820 to 1825, there was no Diet summoned, and during that period the evil activities of Novosiltsoff continued and multiplied.

Then came a quarrel between the Minister of Education, Stanislaw Potocki, and the Church. Potocki had closed forty-five monasteries, three abbeys, and eleven seminaries, a measure that naturally aroused the bitter hostility of the bishops. Subsequently the influence and opposition of the latter compelled his resignation, and he made way for Grabowski, a creature of Novosiltsoff. Popular dissatisfaction at the rigid Press censorship now found its expression in the growth of secret societies. These assemblies had their origin in the freemasonry recently established with the consent and encouragement of the Czar and the Grand Duke Constantine in the kingdom. The chief society was that of the National Freemasonry of Poland, whose principles and organisation extended throughout Prussian Poland as well as the Russian division. Originally each lodge had its bust of the Czar in a place of honour; in Prussian Poland even, the bust of Frederick William had been taken down and that of the Czar established in its place. At the instigation of the Grand Master Lukasinski, who was a major in the 4th regiment of the line, this



MODERN POLAND
Showing Distribution of Races

organisation became a secret society on much the same lines as the Carbonarist societies of Italy; and out of it grew the secret Patriotic Society, controlled by a Committee of which Lukasinski was Chairman. The existence of this Society became known to the government, and suddenly Lukasinski and his fellow-committeemen were arrested. For two years they were kept in prison without a trial, and then Lukasinski was removed to the fortress of Schlusselburg, where he remained in an underground cell until his death, forty years later. The control of the Patriotic Society was then assumed by Krzyzanowski, a lieutenant-general of the Polish Guards, who was soon in communication with a number of Russian societies of the same nature. Krzyzanowski behaved with great caution and restraint, refusing to give any information concerning the membership of his own Society; and when the Russians began to discuss the assassination of high dignitaries he indignantly discontinued his correspondence with them, protesting that "Poles had never stained their hands with the blood of their monarchs."

And now an arbitrary measure known as the Additional Act of 1825 was applied to Poland, suppressing the free and public nature of the proceedings of the Diet. Niemojevski, the leader of the Opposition, was forbidden to come to Warsaw; and when the town of Kalisz elected him as Deputy, the election was cancelled. When the Diet opened, a cordon of Russian troops surrounded the building, and the speech of the Czar was curt and forbidding. At this time the Ministry of Finance was in the hands of Lubecki, an able but unpopular Pole who applied himself with vigour to straightening the complicated affairs of the kingdom. By great firmness and close attention he contrived to eliminate the ever-recurring deficit, and obtained a great deal of influence with the Czar; so much, indeed, that he was able to counteract in some measure the machinations of Novosiltsoff.

The Diet, too, behaved with great restraint, and accepted without undue demur the measures proposed by the government, including one for the establishment of a Land Bank, which is still operative in Russian Poland, and has been of the greatest benefit to the agricultural industry there. The session closed on June 13, 1825, with a sign of approval from the Czar. "You have carried out the expectations of your country and justified my confidence," he addressed them. "It will be my earnest desire to convince you what an influence your action will have on your future." This was his last speech, however, in Poland. In the same year he died, and was succeeded by his younger brother Nicholas, the Grand Duke Constantine being passed over as notoriously unsuitable for the throne.

Nicholas at once proclaimed his attitude towards Poland by proceeding to undo the preparations made by his predecessor for incorporating Lithuania with the new kingdom. The military control was taken away from Constantine, an action which provoked a quarrel between the brothers, the Grand Duke being by now a convert to the scheme for assembling all the Polish nation under one rule. The next reactionary step taken by the new Emperor was to order a number of arrests. Among the victims was Krzyzanowski. An illegal inquiry followed into the affairs of the Patriotic Society, with the result that all its ramifications were laid bare. Krzyzanowski and seven other persons were indicted for treason, and tried before a court consisting of five senators. A sentence of three years imprisonment was passed on Krzyzanowski, and lesser punishments were awarded to three of the others; the rest were acquitted. These judgments, however, were by no means rigorous enough to please Nicholas, who, through his agents, pressed for a death sentence in every case. Eventually, however, by the exertions of Lubecki, who still enjoyed a very considerable influence, the decision of the court was confirmed.

The subsequent war with Turkey induced Nicholas to relent in his attitude of severity towards Poland, and to make efforts to conciliate the Poles. In May 1829, he visited Warsaw, taking with him his son and heir Alexander, afterwards the Czar Alexander II., who wore the Polish uniform and had been taught very successfully to speak the Polish language. The Emperor opened the Diet with a very conciliatory speech, but the assembly was in a sour humour, and the proposals of the government came in for very severe criticism, to the great annoyance of Nicholas. The place of the Patriotic Society had been taken by a new secret society, founded by Wysocki, an instructor in the school of ensigns at Warsaw. The new conspirators were not conspicuous by their qualities of intellect, though they were certainly sincere, courageous, and devoted; also they were not ill-advised of the sinister intentions of the Imperial Court. An immense stimulus to discontent and revolt was soon furnished by the French Revolution of 1830, not only in Poland, but in every country oppressed by reactionary government. The same spirit was at work in Spain, and still more vigorously in Italy. The autocracies grew alarmed, and the means they employed by combination to suppress separate struggles for freedom are part of the history of Europe.

No one was more alarmed at the revolutionary tendencies of the day than the Emperor Nicholas, who desired to make war on the French Republic and planned to employ not only the Polish army, but also Polish money, for this purpose. In this plan he encountered an unexpected but firm opponent in the Grand Duke Constantine, who by this time had grown more liberal and to some extent sympathetic with Polish ideals. Nicholas had also approached Prussia to the same end, and of this the Polish revolutionaries were correctly informed. The most popular leader in Poland at the time was General Chlopicki, a veteran of the Napoleonic wars and a

soldier of the old school. Him the secret societies accordingly approached and invited to become their leader; but Chlopicki refused to be an accomplice to their plans. Nevertheless the conspirators were not deterred. Two separate surprise attacks were made on the night of November 29, 1830, one upon the Belvedere Palace, and the other on the Russian cavalry barracks. In the first only eighteen men took part. They succeeded in killing a Russian general, but Constantine, the real object of the attack, concealed himself and ultimately escaped. The other attack, in which a larger body took part, was a failure. After their repulse the conspirators marched through the streets of Warsaw, calling on all to rise in the popular cause. They received but scanty support, however, and alienated public sympathy by killing several prominent Polish soldiers whom they suspected of Russian sympathies. Meanwhile Constantine had joined his army outside the walls of Warsaw, where he had 7000 troops. Prince Adam Czartoryski and the Minister Lubecki were sent out by the Administrative Council to conciliate him. He replied that the matter was now in the hands of the Poles themselves, who must find a way out of the difficulty.

On November 30th the Administrative Council issued a proclamation to the people in the name of the Czar Nicholas, enjoining upon them the necessity for remaining orderly and quiescent. They also appointed Chlopicki Commander-in-Chief of the Polish army, but this honour the old soldier refused to accept and remained discreetly in retirement. A fresh deputation now approached Constantine; it consisted of Adam Czartoryski, Lubecki, Lelewel, and Ostrowski. Lubecki and Czartoryski urged the Grand Duke to remain in Poland and help to restore order; the others advised him to depart to Russia. Constantine took the latter counsel and left immediately for St Petersburg. Afterwards the Poles realised the extent of their mistake in permitting him to go, for if the

worst came to the worst, he would have been at least a valuable hostage in their hands. His departure was followed by the proclamation of an interim government of seven, composed as follows: Adam Czartoryski, Kochanowski, Pacs, Lelewel, Ostrowski, Dembowski, and Niemczewiez. General Chlopicki now emerged from his hiding to command the army, and on December 5th was proclaimed dictator. A number of ineffectual missions were sent to the Czar, but nobody seemed to realise that a conflict with Russia was now inevitable.

One man, by name Chrzanowski, advocated bold measures. He urged that there was a good Polish army, and an abundance of money in the treasury. It was advisable, therefore, to march on Lithuania, induce the Lithuanians to take up the cause of a free Poland, capture Wilna, and give the Russians no time to organise a systematic campaign. But Chlopicki preferred to wait; eventually, in 1831, he resigned his dictatorship, and was succeeded in the command of the army by Skrzynecki. The last-named was a man who had earned a reputation by the possession of undoubted abilities he was too idle and procrastinatory to exercise. His scheme for the defence of Poland was based upon the strength of a fortified triangle, into which he withdrew his army to await the oncoming Russians.

In 1831 the Diet declared the deposition of the Czar and the formation of a Republic; and a national government was established. Nicholas retaliated by decreeing the whole of Poland under martial law; and issued a proclamation, through his Commander-in-Chief, Diebitsch, ordering the Poles to submit. A very large Russian army was assembled; and a force of 114,000 men entered Poland under the command of Diebitsch, and marched on Warsaw. In preliminary skirmishes at Stoczek and Dobre the Poles achieved a temporary success, and thereupon hazarded all their chances on a decisive encounter at Grochow. The battle of Grochow

was fought on February 25, 1831, and all that day the tide of battle swung backwards and forwards. In the end the Poles were forced to retire, though they had actually inflicted greater losses than they themselves had sustained, and so disorganised the Russian army that, if they had but realised it, the result might have been a victory instead of defeat.

The battle was followed by a panic at Warsaw, and the army was hurriedly increased to the strength of 100,000 men. The assistance of the peasants was invoked with promises of small holdings in land; and this proclamation Nicholas countered with an offer of abolition of serfdom. Whatever effect these had, it is certain that in this revolt the peasants played but a minor role in comparison to their part in Kosciuszko's rebellion. On May 26th the main Polish army, which was recruited chiefly from the ranks of the lesser gentry and the burghers, under the command of General Skrzynecki, encountered a decisive defeat at Ostrolenka. Not long after the battle Marshal Diebitsch and the Grand Duke Constantine both died of cholera, and Marshal Paskievich, a soldier of great energy but brutal and relentless in temperament, was appointed to the command of the Russian army.

Meanwhile Adam Czartoryski and the National Government had resigned; and other members of the Diet reassembled, but could decide on no useful course of action. On September 6th the Russian army stormed the lines in front of Warsaw; by September 8th the city had capitulated; and by October 21st the last flame of revolt had been extinguished in Poland. Nicholas then proceeded to inflict retribution for the ill-fated rising with unprecedented and ruthless vigour and cruelty. On February 14, 1832, the Constitution conceded by Alexander was annulled and replaced by a new organic statute. The Polish forces were incorporated with the Russian army; all electoral institutions were abolished;

Russians were appointed to all the important posts in the government departments, and to educational institutions in particular; the Russian language was made compulsory everywhere. Marshal Paskievich was appointed Viceroy, and with his new dignity entered upon a career of oppression and gross tyranny which lasted for a quarter of a century.

CHAPTER XXV

TRIPARTITE POLAND

THE combination of misunderstanding and malevolence which brought Poland to such an unworthy end were due, at the very outset, to the thwarting of the generous schemes of Alexander by the Congress of Vienna. Only one-fourth of the Poles in Europe were included in the experiment which the Czar finally tried; and the kingdom so constituted was too small to bear the burdens of an autonomous existence. It was disturbed and discontented at the very beginning by its separation from Lithuania, and only inflamed by the hopes held out of that desirable but never accomplished federation. The initial appointments were, to say the least, unfortunate; some of them, as in the case of Novosiltsoff, were very much worse than that. The newly-formed kingdom was pursued by misrepresentations and misconceptions; the inducement to conspiracy was supplied by the separation of the Poles under four systems of government. For the errors that wrecked the last hopes of Polish nationalism the Vienna Congress was deeply to blame, and a liberal share of the blame must be apportioned to Great Britain.

None of the Powers that guaranteed so solemnly the autonomy of the Poles afterwards lifted a finger to prevent the disaster that overtook them. Prussia and Austria assisted in the work of suppression by every means in their power. As shall be shown, both these Powers worked deliberately and silently to thwart the expressed intentions of the

Congress, and eagerly snatched at the excuse the revolt provoked by Russia afforded for their purpose. France, when appealed to by the Diet, simply coquetted with the question; Great Britain bestowed some useless and irritating sympathy upon the suppressed nation. It is, indeed, no misrepresentation to assert that the Powers who had undertaken to secure the autonomy of the Poles looked on when they were deprived of it in dishonourable indifference.

The insurrection of 1830 in the kingdom of Poland was followed by a ruthless suppression of the most ordinary rights and privileges of the Polish people. Those of the rebels who were unable or unwilling to flee the country were visited with rigorous penalties. Many of them were shot or hanged out of hand. Many thousands of them, less fortunate, were condemned to exile in the salt mines of Siberia. Their estates were confiscated and sold at auction, when only Russian bidders were permitted. In pursuance of the Russian policy of expatriation, no fewer than 45,000 persons were transported to the Caucasus and other remote parts of Russia; and Russian families were introduced into Poland in their stead. The use of the national flag was prohibited; the use of the Polish language in every way discouraged. The Church, always in Poland the bulwark of her institutions, traditions, and sentiments, came in for particular attack, and much of its property was confiscated and sold.

These persecutions continued throughout the reign of Nicholas, who died in 1855; and for some years in the reign of his successor, Alexander II. Then a milder régime was initiated, and with the aid of Wielopolski, an eminent Polish noble, Alexander set about undoing the worst of the work of his predecessors. In 1861 the ban on the Polish language and religion was removed, and a system of local councils inaugurated, with a right of appeal to the Russian Government. These reforms were announced as the forerunners of

further liberal concessions by Alexander, but the bad work of the past quarter of a century was bearing its bitter fruit. Every district was honeycombed with secret societies, and the Poles had now set aside their generous horror of assassination. The country swarmed with spies and *agents provocateurs*. The intentions of the conspirators were reported in exaggerated terms to the Russian Government, and in 1863 Russia retorted with a law enforcing conscription in Poland. Under this law some thousands of young men belonging to the best Polish families were seized and sent as conscripts to military depots in Siberia. The sequel had been foreseen, and probably planned, by the Russian authorities. The disaffection already rife in Poland came suddenly to a head, and burst into insurrection.

It was a hopeless, pathetic, if heroic affair from the outset. The risings of 1863 were not organised with any eye to combination; they broke out here and there among a freedom-loving people exasperated beyond all tolerance by a relentless régime of cruel oppression and denationalisation. Each was crushed in turn, with revolting brutality. Many victims of Russian retribution were utterly innocent of complicity in the revolt. Nevertheless for the better part of the two bitter years 1863-64, the youth of Poland, destitute of money or adequate arms or efficient organisation, fought gallantly and desperately against the whole force of Russia. The names of Langiewicz, Traugutt and Hauke, all heroes of that hopeless rebellion, may be particularly mentioned among the many that those desperate days engraved on Polish history.

The Poles relied principally on their hopes of foreign intervention, and especially on the help of Great Britain. At the head of the British Government at that time was Lord Palmerston, and the moral support he had given to Victor Emmanuel had been practically the salvation of the national

cause in Italy. The case of Poland was debated by a very sympathetic House of Commons, and the view was freely maintained that the treatment of Poland by all three partitioning Powers was a direct violation of the Treaty of Vienna. It was decided that a remonstrance should be addressed to the Russian Government. The diplomatic correspondence which followed is of considerable importance and interest. Lord John Russell, the English Foreign Minister, directed the attention of the Russian Government to the following points:

(1) That a complete amnesty should be accorded to all concerned in the outbreak. (2) That national representation should be given to Poland. (3) That Poles should be appointed to public offices, and that there should be full liberty of conscience. (4) That the Polish language should be used in the administration of law and education. (5) That there should be a regular and legal system of conscription.

The answer returned by Prince Gortchakoff, on behalf of Russia, was conciliatory but evasive, and the correspondence was concluded by the Czar's earnest declaration that "to provide for the welfare of his subjects of all races and of every religious conviction is an obligation which he has accepted before God, his conscience, and his people." Lord Palmerston explained to Parliament that Great Britain was entitled, but not obliged, to take action on the breach of the Treaty of Vienna; and as neither this country nor France was eager for active intervention on behalf of Poland, in both countries official interest in the Polish question soon dwindled to indifference.

The aftermath of the revolt of 1863-64 was terrible in the extremities to which both parties proceeded. The Russians, under General Berg, resorted to wholesale hangings and banishments; the Poles replied by secret assassinations. In all 30,000 Poles lost their lives and 150,000 more were

exiled to Siberia. In 1864 the government of Poland was placed in the hands of a Constituent Committee, the leading spirits of which were Prince Cherkassky and Nicholas Milyutin, whose policy was to create a division between the peasants and the nobles, and to gain the confidence and support of the former. An extensive scheme of land reform was introduced; the peasants were granted their holdings of land in perpetuity; and it was enacted that land could only be bought by Russians. As before, the Roman Catholic Church was bitterly attacked; its bishops were exiled; three-fourths of its monasteries were suppressed and their lands confiscated. The attempt to estrange the peasants from their nationalism failed, however, and the consciousness of failure provoked Russia to new severities. In 1869 the Russian language was made obligatory in official correspondence and university lectures; and later the primary and secondary schools were similarly Russianised by Apuchtin, the Curator of Education. A very large number of primary schools were actually closed, and heavy penalties were inflicted on persons who attempted to evade the stringent education laws. As a result, it may be remarked, there were actually fewer schools in Russian Poland at the beginning of the present century than at the end of the fourteenth—five hundred years before! The Russian speech was used even in the teaching of the language and literature of Poland; and Poles were excluded from all government appointments. The Russian legal system was introduced in 1876, and in 1885 the Poles were forbidden to sell their land to any foreigners—a restriction that was abolished twelve years later, but only because of the retaliatory measures adopted by Germany.

Even from the Russian standpoint, however, this régime of repression proved singularly ineffective. Excluded from the government and public service the Poles turned their attention to commerce, and a Polish middle class arose in Poland

for the first time in her history. This class was, and remains, as strongly national and patriotic as any other class of the Polish community, and has brought the cold sanity of commonsense to aid the national cause. Freedom of trade, and the advantage of the Russian markets, notwithstanding the heavy and unequal taxes imposed on the Poles, encouraged the manufacturing industries in a way certainly never contemplated by the Russians themselves. In some industries the number of Polish workmen was multiplied tenfold; Warsaw became a thriving city, and Lodz, in the manufacture of cotton textiles, grew to occupy a place in the world's output second only to that of Manchester. The valuable mines of the country have been developed; and only in regard to roads and railways, which the Poles have been steadfastly discouraged and even forbidden to build, is Russian Poland commercially at a disadvantage. The population has grown with amazing rapidity, and has even doubled in less than a century. It says much for the fortitude of the Polish spirit that notwithstanding the bitter oppression of the last hundred years hardly a single Pole can be said to be denationalised, or to have lost any of the character, courage and aspirations of his race.

. . . . . .

The conduct of Prussia towards her Polish subjects differed but in manner and motive from that of Russia. The Prussian régime certainly opened with finer promise. Prince Radziwill was appointed Viceroy of Prussian Poland, and another able Pole, Zerboni de Sposetti, was made governor. The government appointments were given to Poles, and the Polish language was used in all State affairs. A Land Bank was established in the province, which was still operating with advantage to the agricultural community when the European War broke out. In 1823 means were devised whereby the Polish peasants could obtain land at

reasonable terms, and the peasants benefited immediately and permanently by the change.

As early even as 1817, however, the attempt at denationalisation had begun. German officials were introduced, the schools were gradually Germanised, and the use of the Polish language was more and more discouraged. In 1827 the promise of autonomy was redeemed by the institution of a mock Diet at Posen, composed of four nobles, twenty-two deputies elected by the noble class, sixteen by burghers, and eight by peasants. Three years later a very thorough campaign of Germanisation was initiated by a new governor, named Flottwell. This continued in a modified form, but without much success, until 1873. Then Bismarck himself grew alarmed at the increase in the number and prosperity of the Poles in German Poland, and began to institute severely repressive measures. His first step was the expulsion from German Poland of all Polish subjects of foreign powers. No complaint was or could be levelled against them, except that they were Poles and insisted on remaining Poles; but in consequence of a ministerial decree dated March 26, 1885, nearly 40,000 were expelled from the country without reason or compensation.

Bismarck followed this, in 1886, with an attempt to colonise the Polish countryside with German farmers. On April 26, 1886, the Prussian Diet passed the Colonisation Bill, which established a Royal Commission for the "Colonisation of the Eastern Marches" and empowered it to purchase Polish lands and provide facilities for their cultivation by German settlers. For this purpose—which was no less than the expatriation of the Polish farmers and peasantry—a sum of 100 million marks was at first voted. This amount was later increased, by successive instalments, to no less than 1000 million marks.

The measure reacted upon its originators, however, in a

fashion almost farcical. High prices were paid by the Germans for the land bought and divided into farms, and with the money so realised, the patriotic vendors settled the expropriated Poles on fresh and better holdings. Private enterprise was organised to check and defeat the designs of the Royal Commission. Land banks were set up which lent money to Polish farmers for the purpose of repurchasing land from the Germans settled in Posen. It actually happened at last that the Poles were buying out the Germans faster than the latter could buy out the Poles. Between 1897 and 1900, for instance, the Germans bought 32,697 hectares of Polish land; the Poles repurchased 63,314 hectares—a net gain of 30,617. The Polish workman, too, began to establish himself more securely in the factories of East Prussia, taking the place of the Germans who were lured westward, to Westphalia by the prospect of higher wages and better conditions. The Polish population of Prussian Poland continued to increase out of all proportion to the German population, and in 1907 Prince von Bülow was driven to the extreme step of expropriation. In his work, "Imperial Germany," von Bülow attempts a lengthy and ponderous defence of this policy. "No concern for the Polish people," he writes, "must hinder us from doing all we can to maintain and strengthen the German nationality in the former Polish provinces. Nobody dreams of wishing to thrust our Poles outside the borders of the Prussian kingdom. It is the duty, however, and the right of the Prussian government to see that the Germans do not get driven out of the East of Germany by the Poles. The object is to protect, maintain and strengthen the German nationality among the Poles. Consequently it is a fight for German nationality."

Accordingly the Prussian government proceeded forcibly to dispossess Poles of their land at prices fixed by itself, and against the wish of the holders. A new Law of Exception



Wawel Cathedral (south side), Cracow.



Wawel Cathedral (north side), Cracow.

was voted on June 30, 1907, which prohibited the Poles from building on their own land without official permission. This, in a very great number of cases, has been actually withheld; and the operation of this extraordinary measure has led to the curious circumstance—not rare in Prussian Poland—of a small-holder being obliged to seek shelter for himself, his family and his chattels and effects in a cave rudely dug from the soil of his own farm—the erection of the simplest form of house having been denied to him!

The practical success of this policy was no greater, however, than that of its predecessors; and in March 1908 von Bülow secured the passing—by a narrow majority of 28—of his Expropriation Bill. This authorised the forcible dispossession of a Pole of his estates, and their transfer to German settlers; and notwithstanding the storm of indignant protest raised in Poland and in Liberal Europe generally at the time, the measure passed into operation.

Germany also made exceptional exertions to suppress the Polish language. A law of 1872 forbade the use of Polish in the secondary schools, substituting for it the German tongue. On September 7, 1887, this prohibition was extended to the elementary schools; and in 1905 the teaching of the catechism, which had hitherto remained exempt from the rigorous measures, was included in the general restriction of the use of the Polish language. So hardly was this law pressed that a general strike of Polish school children was organised, and over 100,000 of them refused to be taught their national religion in an alien and—to many of them—unintelligible tongue. The harshest measures were taken to repress the movement. The parents of the strikers were fined, and the children themselves were flogged with inconceivable brutality; some were crippled for life, and at least one was killed outright. The elder among them were sent to reformatory schools in the company of youthful malefactors.

The Prussian regulations against the use of the Polish language in everyday life are stringent in the extreme. A litigant who wishes to plead his cause in Polish in the law-courts is not heard; public meetings of Poles may only take place under police supervision; and in every way the use of the Polish speech is discouraged. As is generally the case among oppressed peoples, however, the strong spirit of Polish nationality has been only the more encouraged by this persecution, and the language and customs of the race stubbornly continue—even if in the silence and seclusion of shuttered houses in side streets.

. . . . . .

The Austrian régime began in Galicia with more severity than was at first employed by either Russia or Prussia. In accordance with the Treaty of Vienna, some shadow of autonomy was conceded to the Austrian Poles; and a Diet of Estates was set up in which magnates, squires, clergy and burghers were all represented. But its legislative functions were considerably limited; it had to content itself with confirming the Imperial Postulates, and with drawing up petitions to which no attention was ever, by any chance, paid in Vienna. The commerce of the country was taxed almost to extinction, and the privileges secured to the Poles by the Treaty of Vienna were cynically ignored. As in Prussian Poland later, the Polish language was suppressed in every possible way; the use of the word Pole in newspapers or books, or in street signs, was even forbidden. Instruction in the University of Lwow was given through the medium of Latin, and all the schools were Germanised.

Taaffe, who succeeded Hauer as Governor of Galicia, contrived to set the Ruthenians against the Poles, and in all the legal proceedings that arose from the frequent racial quarrels the Poles found the courts against them. In religious matters alone, professing with Poland the Roman Catholic faith,

Austria forbore to interfere. On one occasion when disaffection in Galicia seemed likely to result in an armed rising, her ministers, following their Macchiavellian motto, "*Divide et impera*," instigated a division among the Poles themselves. The Polish peasants, brave and generous but easy victims of intrigue, were secretly provided by the Austrian authorities with arms. Led by a man named Szela, a notorious brigand and *agent provocateur*, a section of the peasantry rose in revolt against their Polish masters; and in the indiscriminate and disastrous struggle which followed over 2000 men, women and children of the Polish aristocracy were killed. As a consequence, many Polish patriots, of all classes, were imprisoned or executed.

The régime of Taaffe's successor in office, Lobkowitz, happily saw a notable relaxation in the severity hitherto employed, and this more tolerant tendency was maintained for nearly twenty years. In 1846 the republic of Cracow, established as independent by the Treaty of Vienna, was absorbed without remonstrance by Austria, and the equanimity with which the Poles accepted this action undoubtedly did much to improve the treatment accorded to them. A still more marked improvement in their condition followed the appointment of Stancyki as governor in 1859, and gradually the privilege of autonomy was extended to the province of Galicia. A Diet was created in 1866, in which, by Imperial sanction, both the Polish and the Ruthenian languages were officially used.

In Galicia, however, as in the ancient kingdom 300 years before, the Polish nobility secured a monopoly of Parliamentary representation. In consequence of this, and of the severe commercial restrictions and heavy taxation imposed by Austria on the Poles, Galicia is the only division of Poland in which the old feudal distinctions between prince and peasant, landowner and tenant, still remain, and a new and more ardently national and industrious middle class has not arisen.

In this sense, at least, it may be said that the oppression endured in the other divisions of the country has resulted in actual advantage—morally and commercially—to the Poles. Nevertheless Galicia, as enjoying comparative freedom and tolerance, has afforded the nationalists of Russian and Prussian Poland a *pied-à-terre*, from which they may carry on the propaganda which has hitherto kept the national cause clear and clean, as a sacred thing, above all party claims and petty politics.

. . . . . .

The new nationalism in Poland may be said to have its origin in the Socialist party founded by Szimanski in 1878, in Warsaw. Its detection by the Russian authorities resulted in many arrests, and the apparent extinction of the party. Its place was taken by the Proletariate, and that also was suppressed in 1885, with penalties of even greater rigour. But a workmen's union for social purposes could not well be suppressed, and that, rallying to the remains of the Proletariate, developed into the Polish Socialist Party. The ultimate object of this organisation was the separation of Poland from Russia, but its policy was mainly material, and preoccupied especially with improving the Polish worker's conditions of life and labour. During the period from 1895 to 1899 this body organised nearly 200 strikes, more than half of which it carried to a successful issue. In opposition to the Polish Socialist Party has been formed an organisation to which the wealthy landed gentry belong to a man. Their policy is one of conservatism and conciliation; but they have not succeeded in overcoming the profound distrust of Russia, or evading the opposition of the Polish people.

The most important national organisation in Poland is of recent years undoubtedly the National League, which has grown out of the Polish League, formed in 1886. It became the National League in 1895, and through its newspaper

The Voice addresses Poles in all the three divisions of their country. The aim and work of the League are ably described in Roman Dmowski's work, "Thoughts of a Present-day Pole," published in 1902. M. Dmowski, who was formerly Chairman of the Polish group in the Russian Duma, is the controlling force in the League, which aims at developing the cohesive spirit of nationality among all Poles, and keeping active among them their aspiration for all things Polish. Its work has been to establish centres of national thought, and to perpetuate the Polish language, Polish literature, and the moral strength of Polish nationality. The League has publicly recognised that Polish nationality has most to hope for from Russia, though its propaganda has in the past been more generally anti-German than pro-Russian. The wisdom of its policy has been vindicated by the attitude of the Czar, especially under the circumstances that arose in the summer of 1914. Most fortunate of all achievements of the National League, however, is its success in contriving to bridge the social gaps in the ranks of the Polish people. It now commands the support of the lesser gentry, the peasants, and a large proportion of the artisan class.

CHAPTER XXVI

POLISH LITERATURE

"LIFE needs not to be happy, but to be heroic!" exclaims the Polish poet Leopold Staff; and the later and greater Polish literature, denied by the unhappy political condition of Poland of other attitude and outlook, motive and inspiration, is the complete expression of this courageous gospel. The heroic idealism of her four greatest singers—Mickiewicz, Slowacki, Brodzinski, Krasinski—above all the diversions and disaffections of later schools, was and remains the splendid inspiration of Polish literature.

Alone among European literatures, that of Poland unites most consciously in itself the opposite but not incompatible elements of the Slav and the Latin. The former compose its basis and background, the living blood and bone of its being; the latter are its speech and attire, its vestments, the manner of its life. Themselves the most westerly and most representative branch of the great Slav tree, the Poles, in all their forms of thought and feeling, could not but take on the colour of the Latin culture of the West. Thus their literature has all the patience, the pity, the fidelity to form and colour, and the almost passionate directness that characterise those of other Slav peoples; but also it is tempered by something—that else escapes definition in mere words—very much like that whole-sighted and healthy perception of proportions which we English call a sense of humour. Unlike the Germans, unlike even the Russians, the Poles can write passionate and profoundly

national songs, can sing them with the deepest sense of injury and injustice suffered; and then can turn quite naturally and with equal and grave attention to the description of a delicate shoe on a pretty dancing-mistress's foot. In Germany that would be called a bad lapse; in Poland it is called a good joke.

The most indubitable if indefinable impression one has of Polish literature, more particularly in respect of its last years, is of an extraordinary atmosphere of mental excitement. One is influenced by it as strongly and subtly as if one were suddenly removed to a region at once high and rare. Its air is electric, emotional, inspiring, heroic; its thoughts are physical throbs; its themes are mental thunderstorms. But whether expressed in the apocalyptic delirium of Mickiewicz's "Feast of the Dead," in that Dantesque nightmare of Krasinski called "The Undivine Comedy," in the megalomaniac soliloquies of "Conrad Wallenrod"—whether in the transcendental romanticism of Mickiewicz and Slowacki, or the satirical symbolism of Wyspianski—its effect is always rather mental and spiritual than physical and national. The consequence is unavoidable in a country whose material history is its past, whose national present and future are only held alive and real in the spiritual consciousness of the people.

. . . . . .

Unlike other Slav peoples, and rich as their later literature is in poetry, the Poles are poor in early popular songs and legends. There were a goodly number of both these, of course, but owing probably to the fact that all the early writers and chroniclers used the Latin language, the popular minstrelsy of the country did not pass into and was therefore not preserved in the popular tongue, Polish. The chronicler Gallus, however, translated an eleventh-century poem on Boleslaw the Brave into the Latin; and a few other old Polish songs have thus been preserved. As we have said, all the early literature

of the country is in Latin. The first known specimen of the Polish speech that remains to us is Queen Margaret's Psalter (conjecturally called after the wife of King Louis of Hungary), which was discovered in 1826 in the Convent of St Florian. In date it is roughly of the middle of the fourteenth century, and probably is only a copy of a much older text. Then there is the " Piesn Boga Rodzica," an ancient Polish battle-hymn addressed to the Virgin. The oldest MS. copy extant is dated 1408, and is preserved at Cracow. The authorship of the hymn was subsequently, though incorrectly, assigned to St Adalbert (d. 997).

Other monuments of the Polish language of older date than the sixteenth century are (1) the imperfect Bible of Queen Sophia, or Bible of Szaroszpatak—said to have been written for Sophia, the fourth wife of Jagiello, about the year 1455; (2) five religious songs dating from the fifteenth century and ascribed to Andrew Slopuchowski, prior of the monastery of the Holy Cross on Lysa Gora; (3) a fragment of a hymn in praise of Wycliffe, composed when the latter's doctrines first made their way into Poland; and (4) the prayer-book of one Waclaw, a sermon on marriage and a number of Polish glosses. Most of these are preserved to-day in Cracow.

Several of the Latin chroniclers in early Poland achieved a reputation that extended far beyond the frontiers of their own country. Martin Gallus, whom we have already mentioned, is variously described as a Walloon, a Frenchman, or an Italian. He lived in Poland between 1110 and 1135 and transcribed a number of the legends of the country in a rich and rhythmic prose. His works had a wide following. Gallus was succeeded by Matthew Cholewa and Vincent Kadlubek, two bishops of Cracow, and by Bogufal or Boguchwal, bishop of Poznan. Kadlubek enjoyed for many years a considerable popularity as a chronicler. He was born in 1160 and educated at the University of Paris ; he became a Cistercian monk

and died in Poland in 1223. He was a spirited writer and commentator on the events of his time. Among succeeding writers of note may be mentioned Martin Polonus, who died about 1280; and Jan of Czarnkow, historian and panegyrist of Casimir the Great, who died a hundred years later. With the exception of the few works we have mentioned, Poland has no early literature in the native language; the reason doubtless being that at first national education was almost entirely in the hands of ecclesiastics, most of whom were strangers to the country, and unfamiliar or impatient with its speech.

The first book printed in Poland was issued in 1474 by Günther Zainer, who set up a press in Cracow. Some forty years later a Silesian named Hieronymus Wietor began printing in the Polish tongue. The first complete work so published was issued at Cracow in 1521. It was called "The Speeches of the Wise King Solomon"; the translation, as the printer announces in a preface, being executed by one Jan Koszycki, and dedicated to Anna Wojnicka, wife of the castellan of the city. In the following year a "Life of Christ," translated into Polish by Balthasar Opec, and adorned with woodcuts, appeared from the same press. Among other printers who achieved some repute in Poland during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century may be mentioned the names of Sybeneicher and Piotrkowczyk.

Several interesting and even important histories appeared in Poland towards the end of the fifteenth century. At this time flourished the famous historian Jan Dlugosz, bishop of Lwow, who wrote under the Latin name of Longinus. His work on Poland is most valuable, and distinguished alike by its style and scholarship. It deals most intimately and faithfully with the period 1386-1480. About the first year of the sixteenth century appeared the brief but interesting "Memoirs of a Polish Janissary." These were written in

Polish, though the author was no Pole but more probably a Serb. They achieved some renown both in Poland and abroad for their pictures of Polish life.

Lacking though it is in records of early popular poetry, Polish literature, in the prime of its later periods, is incomparably and inestimably endowed with the poetic tradition. It has no Chaucer—at least, no contemporary equal to Chaucer—but it has many Chattertons. It has no Milton, but it has a Molière and a Marlowe. It has, on the whole, less of occasional genius than of general merit; though it has many honourable names that fall under either heading. In those early days in her history when the national spirit and aspirations of Poland had not yet learned to clothe themselves in the national language, there were many writers, like Clement Janiski (1516-1543), who cultivated Latin poetry with some success. But there was no native poet in the native tongue worth mentioning before Rej of Naglowice. Rej was a Protestant, and was born in 1505. After a somewhat dissipated youth he turned soberly to translating religious works into Polish—among them the Psalms. His best work was undoubtedly that cumbrously called "The Mirror of the Life of an Honourable Man." He also wrote a mystery—after the manner popular in Poland from very early times—entitled "The Life of Joseph in Egypt." He died in 1569.

The next notable name in Polish history is that of Jan Kochanowski—"the Prince of Polish Poets." Kochanowski was born in 1530, of a family distinguished for their contributions to their country's literature. He studied at the Universities of Padua and Paris, at which latter town he became intimate with Ronsard. In 1564, after his return to Poland, he became the secretary of King Sigismund August; at his death, twenty years later, he left a number of poetical works of note. His play, "The Despatch of the Greek Ambassadors"

—a one-act piece in twelve scenes, written in rhymeless iambic pentameters—is a typical product of the Renaissance period. It was performed at the marriage of Jan Zamoyski and Christine Radziwill, in the presence of King Stephen and his Queen, at Ujazdowo, near Warsaw, in 1578. His most popular work, however, is his "Lamentations" (*Treny*) written on the death of his daughter Ursula. These exquisite elegies won the praise even of Mickiewicz; they raise their author into the intimate and exclusive circle, the rare atmosphere of real and living poets. Though his manner was classical and largely imitative, his matter was Polish and original and real. He was the first of the national poets of Poland.

Szarzynski, who died young in 1581, may be mentioned as the first writer to introduce the sonnet in Polish poetry—a form afterwards developed to its most perfect design by Mickiewicz and Gaszynski. Many Polish poets attempted, though generally with but indifferent success, the pastoral songs of Theocritus. The Pastoral was a literary form that found itself flourishing in Poland rather as an ephemeral and artificial result of the Renaissance than as any expression of a vigorous and robust rural life. Of the latter there could be but a hollow and hypocrital mockery while the whole peasant-class was enslaved in Poland. Pastorals, however—and good pastorals too—were written by a poet of genius called Szymonowicz. He was born in 1554 and died in 1624; and has been considered by so reputable a judge as Mickiewicz himself as a singer of distinction and a worthy follower of Theocritus. He certainly redeemed the coldly classic and merely imitative manner of his works with much virile description of the national life of his country. For his period the songs of Szymonowicz—among them may be cited "The Lovers," "The Reapers," and "The Cake"—were unusually instinct with sympathy for the wretched condition of the peasantry. They were, as was almost general at that time, sometimes

ludicrously artificial and turgid in manner; but the tone and motive rang true.

Another poet of this period who wrote pastorals was Zimorowicz, a native of Lwow, whose promising life was abruptly terminated at the age of twenty-five. There is one lyric of his beginning

Ukochana Lancelloto!
Ciebie nie prosze o zloto!

—"Beloved Lancelot, I ask thee not for gold!"—that even to alien English ears has unmistakably the true, elegant lilt of our own Herrick.

Many Polish authors of repute still confined their works to the medium of the Latin tongue. Of these Casimir Sarbiewski, or Sarbievius, as his Latin surname ran, was even held to have approached more nearly than any other intervening poet the high standard of Horace. Sarbiewski died in 1640. Another poet of some eminence was Sebastian Fabian Klonowicz (1545-1602). He wrote both in the Polish and the Latin (under the name of Acernus) and aroused the hostility of the clergy by his reformist doctrines. In his "Worek Judaszow" and "Victoria deorum" he satirises the contemporary struggles of nobility and clergy in Poland under the obvious disguise of a mythical conflict between the gods on Olympus. In the early part of the sixteenth century appeared the first historical work in Polish—"Kronika polska." Its author, Martin Bielski, a Protestant, was born in 1495 and was educated, like most other illustrious Poles of his time, at the University of Cracow. He was a pronounced Calvinist, and on this account the success of his history suffered somewhat from the general suspicion attached in this age to the works of heretics. On his death his son Joachim (1540-1599) continued his work on Poland.

The spread of Protestantism in Poland, though it never

really menaced or uprooted—as in some other countries—the dominion of the Roman Church, nevertheless made its influence felt on the literature of this and later periods. As early as 1530, for instance, Lutheran hymns were sung in the Polish language at Thorn. In 1553, at Brzesc, appeared a Protestant translation of the whole Bible, published at the expense of Nicholas Radziwill. A less wholesome influence, however, was that of the so-called macaronic period, which lasted from 1606 till 1764. This time is chiefly distinguished by the deliberately degraded, foolish and artificial forms and effects affected by most Polish writers, under the influence probably of the foreign notions and habits of mind and manner that were now firmly establishing themselves in Poland. Only one name stands out from the riot of ridiculous and by no means robust buffoonery in full blast at this period—that of Waclaw Potocki, whose "War of Chocim" remained the most faithful epic of Polish national life until the "Pan Tadeusz" of Mickiewicz. An extraordinary number of personal memoirs and diaries have been preserved, in manuscript or in print, from this time of transition; among them must be mentioned those of John Chrysostom Pasek, a Masovian noble. Pasek, after a life of varied and vivid adventure, died near Cracow about the year 1700.

The reign of the last King of Poland, Stanislaw Poniatowski, saw rise and wane the second great period of Polish literature. By this time Polish writers were almost entirely under French and Western influence; and this period produced no works of truly national feeling. A national theatre, it is true, was founded at Warsaw in 1765, largely, of course, under the direction of the Court; but there was no really national drama until a much later day. The most prominent of the poets of this time was Ignatius Krasicki, bishop of Warmia (1735-1801). Krasicki wrote a number of fair comedies and some dull poetry, and enjoyed the friendship of Frederick

the Great. Without doubt the best writer of Polish comedies, however, was Count Alexander Fredro (1793-1876) who introduced the real spirit of comedy into Poland. His plays, which are still popular in the country, clearly show the influence of Molière, though retaining much native vigour and originality. The third and greatest period of Polish literature is that now about to be discussed.

. . . . . .

As a French writer has declared, they were her poets who saved Poland. Her poets ardently fanned the national flame into a steady fire, preserved the national spirit when the national body had been dismembered, preached unceasing courage and sacrifice and sober endurance when even the memory of material happiness seemed lost. The national endeavour of extinguished Poland, as expressed in song and saga, is best remembered by four redoubtable names—Mickiewicz, Brodzinski, Slowacki, Krasinski. Polish history since the first Partition boasts, and rightly, of other poets; and other poets of hardly less merit. But in all this unhappy but heroic period there are no writers, whether of prose or poetry, who so ably, nobly, and intimately express and reveal the spirit of Polish nationality—in all its momentary moods of passion, patience, revolt, retribution, hope and fear—as these we have named. The memory of one of them, Brodzinski, has fallen on some obscurity even in his own country; his fellows, in company with others less worthy, have achieved all of honour, dignity, distinction, and reverence their works deserve. They were all noble and exalted singers of a nation fallen on evil times.

Casimir Brodzinski was historically the first poet of the Polish revolt. He was born of humble peasant parentage in 1791, the year of the great but unavailing Constitution. In 1812, together with many of his countrymen who were confident, like himself, of the fulfilment of Napoleon's promise

to restore Poland, he joined a regiment of artillery in the army which entered Russia in that year. After suffering all the horrors of that horrible retreat, he was wounded at Leipsig and taken prisoner by the Prussians. On his release he returned to Poland and became professor of Polish literature at the University of Warsaw, where he might have remained all his life an humble if charming discourser on letters, a self-deprecatory singer of delicate minor songs, a heart in exile and sighing for his native mountains of Tatry, if the revolution of 1830 had not suddenly and gloriously broken out. The revolt, which proved fatal for his country, was nevertheless fortunate for Brodzinski. It saved him from mediocrity. In his "Popular Songs of the Polish Peasants," composed in a moment of national and individual crisis, of enthusiasm, passion, and reawakened hope, he gave spontaneous utterance to the simple yet noble and fervent emotions of the common people. Through them all pulsed the feelings of a great and generous heart.

While this message moved his humbler countrymen to unparalleled heights of heroism, the appeal Brodzinski uttered before the *savants* of the Society of Friends of Science in Warsaw, on May 3, 1831, succeeded equally in stirring the intellectuals. But the fate of the insurrection proved also the fate of its chief singer. His friends, alarmed at the feebleness of his bodily constitution, despatched him to Carlsbad and later to Dresden to recuperate. At the latter place he was the guest of Odyniec, friend of Mickiewicz, and there the latter wrote: "If Brodzinski is still with you give him my compliments. Although I am not acquainted with him personally, you know I hold him in very high esteem"—a mark of affection that moved the modest peasant-poet to tears. He died at Dresden on October 10, 1831, and was buried there. "The Divine Peasant" Brodzinski has been called by that sweet singer of the Ukraina, Bohdan Zaleski; and the title

is not inapt. He was the embodiment of the Polish peasant—robust, courageous, gentle, humbly heroic and honest, with heart and hearth and home rooted deep in the regenerating earth.

There is a monument in an old square in Warsaw on the occasion of whose unveiling, some years ago, the authorities had forbidden any form of public demonstration. A great concourse of people assembled for the ceremony; but it assembled in silence. No speeches were delivered, no word in that whole crowd was spoken. Only at the critical moment of the actual unveiling of the statue did some over-tense nerves break, and deep sobs make themselves heard here and there in the crowd. It was a monument to Adam Mickiewicz, the greatest poet of Poland. Mickiewicz was born near Nowogrodek, in Lithuania, on December 24, 1798. His youth, like that of other patriotic sons of his time, was nourished on the alternate hopes and fears that attended the passage of *la Grande Armée* in its disastrous adventure through Poland. At the University of Wilna the young Mickiewicz became the leader of a series of successive nationalist societies, most of the members of which were eventually arrested and imprisoned. A number were sent to Siberia in chains; Mickiewicz himself suffered imprisonment. By this time he had already published several poetical works of great beauty and merit—"Ballads and Romances," "Grazyna," and "Dziady"—but the period preceding his arrest had seen him reduced to an inactive and unprofitable despair, a melancholy brooding over his own misfortunes. The rigours of his incarceration, strangely enough, had the happy effect of diverting his thoughts to less personal subjects, of inducing the concentration of his mind on the national sorrow and oppression of his country. Thenceforward, it is related, his work took on a nobler, national aspect; from a poet he became a propagandist, a patriot, even a prophet.



Frederic Chopin.

He was eventually released from prison and removed to St Petersburg; here, however, his intimacy with Russian reformers caused his expulsion; and in turn he stayed at Odessa and Moscow; finally venturing again to return to the capital. At St Petersburg he had the daring to publish his famous work "Conrad Wallenrod." Wallenrod, a patriotic Lithuanian, lived at the time of the tyrannous régime of the Teutonic knights in Lithuania. Inspired with the passion for revenge and retribution, he joined the Order, became its head, and then seized the first opportunity to lead it deliberately to disaster. The Poles were quick to grasp the suggestion of Mickiewicz's poem, and enlisted in large numbers in the army of the Grand Duke Constantine, then Viceroy of Poland. The training and information thus acquired they used to good purpose in the rising of November 29, 1830, when they drove the Russian governor and his troops out of Warsaw.

Meanwhile the author of the inspiration himself at first escaped arrest, owing to the fact that the Russians but tardily realised the import of the book. When the order for his arrest was issued, friendly influence in high quarters delayed its execution, and Mickiewicz was given time to flee the country. For the rest of his life he lived abroad, the most noted of many notable exiles from his afflicted native land. He travelled in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, and finally in France. At Weimar he met Goethe, in company with his friend and eulogist Odyniec; at Geneva he made the acquaintance of Sigismund Krasinski, a fellow poet of hardly less repute; at Venice he abandoned himself entirely and passionately to the influence of Byron; at Paris he became the leader and prophet of the growing group of Polish exiles—dedicating to them his "Book of the Polish Pilgrims" and arousing at the same time their reverent enthusiasm for the master himself and their ardour for the cause of their country. At Paris, too, he received from the French Government the Chair of

Slavonic literature at the Collège of France; and there his lectures drew daily a devoted crowd of students, eager listeners, disciples, volunteers.

It was at this time that nostalgia for his native Lithuanian plains and forests—the same forests that drew from him in earlier years the cry: "Lithuania! thy murmuring forests sang to me more sweetly than the nightingales of Baïdar, than the virgins of Salghir"—moved him to recreate in the epic "Pan Tadeusz," his greatest and most greatly prized work, their singing brooks and sighing trees, the simple, patriarchal life of the peasantry he knew and loved well. On November 26, 1855, after an attack of cholera, this greatest of the poets of Poland died. He was buried in the cemetery at Montmorency, the last resting-place of many another of his exiled countrymen. Later his country claimed his ashes, and to-day they lie among the tombs of the Polish kings in Cracow.

Julius Slowacki, who in poetry and philosophy, and all save the passionate cult of Poland, was as unlike his countryman Mickiewicz as two patriotic poets of the same era can be, was born at Krzemieniec in Volhynia, on August 23, 1809. From his father, a professor of Polish literature and in his way a poet of some merit, he inherited a devotion to the works of the ancient world. The passionate tears of childish pity seared his cheeks as, a boy of nine, he read for the first time the 24th song of the Iliad, where Priam falls at the feet of Achilles. His early environment—of soft mists and tender landscapes, as subtly appealing to vague senses as a Polish countryside can well be—he has gracefully described in a little poem, "The Hour of Reflection." "There, among the mountains," he exclaims, "the eyes of memory discern my own beautiful town, its towers rising from the valley into the narrow vault of blue. There is no town more entrancing than this, when the jewel-like lights of her homes shine softly through the valley-mist at night; or when, in the morning sunlight, her rows

of little white houses gleam like pearls among the emerald of her meadows." Later the poet describes his own youth in that town among the hills: "In this valley, among the poplars that rise like columns, imagine a child, pale but with warm sentiments. How he dreamed of the future; how he flew as lightly on his thoughts as the fragrance of the flowers; how he sought to divine by instinct the character of the world which had hitherto been denied to him; and how, years later, the old dreams returned to him, and he saw them again with his own eyes and recognised the faded ghosts of them. He was nourished upon dreams; they were each day's daily bread . . . but to-day the bread is bitter . . . only wormwood is left in the cup."

While Slowacki was still engaged in his studies at Wilna, the Polish romantic movement had reached its zenith. For Slowacki, as for Mickiewicz, Byron was the god of his literary universe; Goethe and Schiller made a humble second and third. He was in Warsaw when the famous revolt of 1830 flamed out, and his songs, like those of Brodzinski, gave courage and inspiration to his heroic, hapless countrymen. It was on this occasion that he composed the celebrated Polish hymn "Boga Rodzica," an invocation of the Virgin Mother. "Hear us, Queen of Heaven!" it ardently exclaimed. "It is the song of our fathers; for now flames the dawn of freedom, now sounds the tocsin of liberty, now flows the blood of a free people—Mother of God!" This song of the Polish battlefield was speedily followed by such masterpieces as "Kulik" and the "Song of the Lithuanian Legion," in the last-named of which he cried "How many hearts beat for Lithuania (his own country)! For her sake how many hearts have ceased to beat!" Slowacki was sent by the revolutionaries on a diplomatic mission to London; during his stay there the news arrived that the revolt was over, that the red dawn of Polish freedom had set more bloodily than it rose, that Siberia

and the salt mines awaited him at Warsaw. He turned, therefore, to Paris, where were many other melancholy exiles; and later, weary of the incessant intrigue and turmoil of the Polish factions there, to Geneva. Here he wrote "Kordian," a dramatic poem which provided a quite new revelation of his genius, and created a half-heroic, half-human, mystical and emotional character whom the poet called, after a quaint conceit, Kordi-an, Man of Heart. Later he published that sombre and terrible, if sometimes obscure, work called "Anhelli"—a symbolic vision, simply and almost baldly written in prose Biblical in its austerity, of the hell and horror of Siberia. Concerning this work the brilliant poet Krasinski himself wrote, on the occasion of the death of its creator: "Inscribe on his tomb *To the Author of Anhelli.* These words alone will ensure him a lasting glory for the future."

His travels in Italy and Greece were the cause and inspiration of a number of noble works, now in the vein of Byron, now in that of Dante. Among the poems published at this time may be mentioned "The Pestilence in the Desert," "Wenceslaus," "In Switzerland," "The Inferno of Dante," "The Spiritual Birth," "The Master Thinker," "Samuel Zborowski," and "Balladyna," a tragic ballad.

In 1848 he made a desperate attempt to return to Poland, where a fresh revolution was impending; but before he could reach his native country the insurrection had broken out and been in its turn broken, and nothing remained for him to do but to return disconsolately, a spirit likewise broken, to his exile in Paris. And there, on April 3rd of the following year, he died.

Sigismond Krasinski, whose name has been already mentioned here, is generally known in Poland as the "Anonymous Poet." The title arose from his long reluctance to sign his works, overwhelmingly popular though they were in Poland even during his lifetime. His reason it is not hard to under-

stand: his father, a brilliant officer under Napoleon, had since turned renegade and become a puppet in the hands of the Tsar. His grandfather was a leader of the famous Confederation of Bar, and with his heroic fellows struggled for years against the oppressor; later joining Lafayette in America and falling honourably on the battlefield before Savannah. The Anonymous Poet himself was born in Paris on February 9, 1812, and the Emperor Napoleon himself stood sponsor at his baptism. His entry into literature, as a student in Warsaw, lay in the writing of historical romances in the style of our own Scott. Later the shame that came upon him at the apostasy of his father drove him into exile at Geneva, where the struggle between his filial instincts and his fidelity to the cause of Poland first inspired him to poetry. One of his earliest and best known works he called, in noble parody of the great Italian, "The Undivine Comedy." Of his work "Iridion," the story of a Greek slave's hatred, resentment, and struggle against the Empire of Rome, one critic has said: "It is a whole world of antiquity carved in the marble of Paros by the hand of a Michael-Angelo." Its publication at once raised its unknown author into the first rank of contemporary poets. The appearance of "The Psalms of the Future," of "The Dawn," and "The Uncompleted Poem" established his reputation as a singer of great sweetness, a poet of noble and lofty ideals. Krasinski died at Paris in 1858, only a few months after his unhappy parent. He was followed to the grave by the sad company of exiles among whom, since the red setting of the sun that gleamed fitfully for the Poles in 1830, the anonymous poet and patriot had made his home.

With the death of Krasinski ends the full splendour of Polish literature—the great, almost heroic, names of passionate lovers who not infrequently put down the pen of revolt to take up the sword of insurrection. In later years, nevertheless, there are many notable and even noble names

associated with the practice of letters in Poland. Bohdan Zaleski, who has already received mention here, was the accomplished leader of the so-called Ukrainian school of romantism. He was born in 1802; and like most of his contemporaries, was a student at the university of Warsaw. Like many of them, too, he was forced to seek refuge abroad during the turbulent 'thirties; and he was still an exile in France when death overtook him at the age of eighty-four. The best-known work of this "sweet singer of the Ukraina," as he has been called, is his poem, "The Spirit of the Steppe."

Among Polish historians of note there is Szujski (1835-1882), whose works, "A Glance at Polish History" and "The History of Poland," gained for their author a well-deserved reputation. Schmitt, who died in the same year, was another historical writer of merit. He played an active part in the nationalist risings of his youth, and was even condemned to death, though the sentence was subsequently commuted by the Austrian Government to a term of imprisonment. The works of Szajnocha (1818-1886) have been compared, for their vigour and vivid colouring, to those of Macaulay; and other Polish historians who must be mentioned are Lelewel and Tatomir.

In philosophy the Poles, like all the Slav nations, have few names of European importance. In science and mathematics, of course, they have the astronomer Copernicus, but there is no such eminent figure among the abstract philosophical writers of Poland. John Sniadecki, and his brother Andrew, Goluchowski, Trentowski, Liebelt, and Kremer are the only names of any note.

Modern Polish literature is chiefly represented by the novel, the writing of which, it must be admitted, Polish authors have cultivated with distinction. This branch of literary creation can claim the greatest of living adherents in Poland—Sieroszewski, Sienkiewicz, Eliza Orzeszko, and

Gabrielle Zapolska. Waclaw Sieroszewski, even better perhaps than his more famous colleague Sienkiewicz, has caught and expressed the modern Polish spirit—a spirit at once robust yet sensitive, simple yet subtle, passionate yet chaste. His novels, even where they treat of the Siberian torments the author himself suffered in youth, are notably free from the hatred, if not from the horror, of the outrages of oppression. Sieroszewski's most interesting work is without doubt that called, "Twelve Years in the Land of the Yakuts," a valuable addition to Slavonic folk-lore. Madame Gabrielle Zapolska has been called the Polish Zola, from the force and realism of her pictures of modern life. She has published many plays and novels of considerable note, and enjoys a well-deserved popularity in Poland. Eliza Orzeszko, the only other Polish woman who has succeeded in establishing a reputation as a writer, is a clever and facile novelist whose tales have entertained the readers of many contemporary journals and magazines in Poland.

But the only Polish author of this age—and indeed of any age—who has achieved an international reputation, is that one named last in our list—Sienkiewicz. Henry Sienkiewicz, best known to the English public as the author of "Quo Vadis," was born in 1846 in the province of Siedlce, in Russian Poland. He studied philosophy at the University of Warsaw, and in 1872 published his first work, a humorous novel entitled, "A Prophet in His Own Country." In 1876 he visited the United States, and the vivid narrative of his experiences there, as published in the Warsaw journal *Gazeta Polska*, won him an immediate reputation in Poland. Since then his fame as an historical novelist has reached the remotest parts of the world. His most famous work, "Quo Vadis," a powerful study of Roman life and manners under the Emperor Nero, was first published in 1895, and has since been translated into over thirty languages. His real masterpiece,

however, is rather the magnificent trilogy, "With Fire and Sword," "The Deluge," and "Pan Michael"—a series of novels centering around Polish life in the seventeenth century. M. Sienkiewicz, who in 1905 received the Nobel Prize for Literature, may be compared without exaggeration to the elder Dumas, whose rich and vigorous imagination, erudition, and industry he incomparably shares.

As we have said, the novel has been the most successful form adopted by Polish writers since the Revolution of 1863. There have been, notwithstanding, a number of undoubted poets whose names need to be mentioned here. There is Adam Asnyk (1838-1897) whose poems and dramas approach most narrowly in manner the work of the modern realistic school; and there are Wyspianski, Reymont, and Maria Konopnicka—all poets uncompromisingly Polish in character, style, and inspiration.

CHAPTER XXVII

POLAND AND THE WAR

THE European War, which threw the armies of three great nations in conflict on the dismembered soil of Poland, broke out on July 28, 1914, with the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia. On August 1st Germany declared war on Russia; and on the 6th Austria-Hungary followed suit. The troops of all three powers were already massed on the Polish frontier —in some cases they had already crossed. There were Polish soldiers to the number of 600,000, in all the armies, and the question of the loyalty and support of these, as well as of the civil subjects of the respective belligerent powers, became suddenly a matter of the most urgent importance.

Immediately after the outbreak of war both Germany and Austria, sensible of the value of Polish support, issued almost identical proclamations to the Poles. They promised a new kingdom of Poland, reuniting the Polish territories now under their own and their enemy's rule, and mentioned more or less vaguely measures of autonomy and tolerance of religion and speech. It is enough to say, from all the information that has yet come to hand, that these manifestos were received with no great confidence and with no more enthusiasm—in the case of Prussian Poland particularly—than was discreet in view of the helplessness of the Polish subjects of both Powers in the face of a great national tragedy. The most indubitable and spontaneous demonstration of Polish opinion and of the attitude adopted by the Poles towards the war, occurred in re-

spect of Russian Poland. On August 9, 1914, M. Victor Jaronski, Deputy for Kielce, made a notable declaration in the Duma in the name of the Polish group.

"In this historic moment," he said, "when the Slavonic world and the German, led on by that immemorial foe of Poland, Prussia, are standing up against one another in decisive encounter, the Polish Nation, bereft of independence and of the power of manifesting its own will, finds itself in a tragic situation. The tragedy is accentuated by the fact not only that Polish ground is the theatre of war, but that the Polish Nation, torn into three, beholds her sons in three camps enemy to one another.

"Territorially divided, we Poles nevertheless in feeling and sympathy for the Slav must stand as one. We are inclined hereto not only by the justice of the cause Russia has embraced but also by political reason. The world-wide significance of the present moment relegates to the background all domestic reckonings. God grant that Slavdom, under the leadership of Russia, may resist the Teuton, even as, five centuries ago, Poland and Lithuania resisted him at Grünwald. May the blood shed by us, and the horrors of this to us fratricidal war, lead to the reconstitution of the dismembered Polish nation."

This utterance, which evoked the greatest enthusiasm in the Duma and in the Russian press, had an even more notable sequel. On August 16th, a Proclamation was issued by the Grand Duke Nicholas, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armies, to the Poles. The full text, which has been literally translated from the Polish original, is as follows :—

Poles!

The hour has struck in which the sacred dream of your fathers and forefathers may find fulfilment.

A century and a half ago, the living flesh of Poland

was torn asunder, but her soul did not die. She lived in hope that there would come an hour for the resurrection of the Polish nation and for sisterly reconciliation with Russia.

The Russian Army now brings you the joyful tidings of this reconciliation. May the boundaries be annulled which cut the Polish nation to pieces! May that nation re-unite into one body under the sceptre of the Russian Emperor. Under this sceptre Poland shall be re-born, free in faith, in language, in self-government.

One thing only Russia expects of you: equal consideration for the rights of those nationalities to which history has linked you.

With open heart, with hand fraternally outstretched, Russia steps forward to meet you. She believes that the Sword has not rusted which, at Grünwald, struck down the enemy.

From the shores of the Pacific to the North seas, the Russian armies are on the march. The dawn of a new life is breaking for you.

May there shine, resplendent above that dawn, the sign of the Cross, symbol of the Passion and Resurrection of Nations!

(Signed) *Commander-in-Chief and General Adjutant,*
NICHOLAS.

PETERSBURG, *August* 14, 1914.

The Russian manifesto found a quick response in the kingdom of Poland. On August 7th, the day after its publication, four of the leading political organisations of Russian Poland—the Democratic National Party, the Polish Progressive Party, the Realist Party and the Polish Progressive Union—issued the following statement:—

The representatives of the undersigned political parties, assembled in Warsaw on the 16th August, 1914, welcome the Proclamation issued to the Poles by His Imperial Highness the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Forces as an act of the foremost historical importance, and implicitly believe that upon the termination of the war, the promises uttered in that proclamation will be formally fulfilled, that the dreams of their fathers and forefathers will be realised, that Poland's flesh, torn asunder a century and a half ago, will once again be made whole, that the frontiers severing the Polish nation will vanish.

The blood of Poland's sons, shed in united combat against the Germans, will serve as a sacrifice, offered upon the altar of her Resurrection.

Subsequently a new Polish National Council was formed in Warsaw of representatives of a large number of political and other institutions in all parts of Poland. The Executive Committee of the Council comprised such eminent Poles as Count Wielopolski, Chairman of the Polish group in the Russian Imperial Council; M. Roman Dmowski; Prince Zdzislaw Lubomirski; Prince Sevezyn Czetwertynski; and M. Zygmunt Balicki, editor of *Przeglad Narodowy* (the National Review). On November 25, 1914, the Council addressed the following Manifesto to the Poles in all three Empires :—

Countrymen!

When the present war broke out, our nation instantly became aware that an important page of her history was being turned, that her future hung in the balance.

Poland's most dread foe, who had vowed her complete annihilation, who with approved cunning had, through widespread influence, armed all forces against us, suddenly stood forth as the enemy not only of ourselves but of

almost the whole of Europe. And we who hitherto alone in desperate daily strife had defended against this enemy the domains of our fathers, all at once saw lifted against him the arms of the world's great powers: Russia, France, England.

We had always understood on which side our place would be. This was now indicated without hesitation by the thought of all sections of the community, by the healthy instinct of the people themselves.

Germany's defeat in this struggle meant victory for us.

Our attitude was responded to by Russia through the Proclamation of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, a proclamation announcing the fulfilment of our most sacred desires, the joining together of the dismembered body of the nation, her freedom of being and of growth. This proclamation found an echo among Russia's western allies: the restoration of Poland was seen to be one of the great tasks of this bloody war, a task crying for accomplishment. And our nation itself received the proclamation with all the more ardour. There stood clearly expressed before the world that purpose which a new dawn had illumined for us at the very outbreak of war.

In presence of this purpose, of the efforts and sacrifices necessary to its realisation, all the conflicts and tortures of yesterday faded into the past. One object alone confronted the nation: the overthrow of Germany's sinister power, the unification of Poland under the sceptre of the Russian monarch.

Upon this object our nation concentrated herself, towards this end turned all her endeavours.

From the very first it was recognised by the majority that if singleness of purpose were to find expression in unity of action, it must first find pilotage. We understood that the historic magnitude of this moment thrust aside

all the programmes for which we had been combating, that in time of war party must cease to speak. The nation, acting as a whole, was bound to produce one national organisation competent to give expression to the manifest will of the immense majority. The creating of this organisation, of this pilotage, had to be undertaken by those who above all were responsible for the country's politics.

The undersigned, deputies from the Kingdom of Poland to both legislative bodies of the Empire, former deputies, and leaders of social work in this country, have united with the object of drawing together around the common cause all our countrymen irrespective of views or convictions, unanimous only in the possession of one purpose and herein expressing to-day the clear will of the nation. Not being able, owing to present conditions, to assemble all those whom they would desire to see in their midst, and purposing to fill out the frame according to the measure of their work's progress, they realise that further delay in setting about that work would carry detriment to the cause. Therefore the undersigned this day unite to form a Polish National Council, thus laying the foundation of Poland's political organisation, giving expression to her leading tendencies, making her one in purpose and in deed.

The nation is at this moment with the whole of her strength helping to secure victory over the Germans. Our youth has rushed with ardour into the ranks of that Russian army in which the sons of our land are fighting in hundreds of thousands for the great cause; the Polish civil population has zealously co-operated with that army, doing all in its power to assist in the struggle against our mighty foe; and whereas war has carried to our territory unevaded devastation, ruin and destitution,

we are bearing the calamity with calm, confident in a luminous morrow for the land of our fathers. The foe did not terrify us by his strength, even when he appeared at the gates of our capital: nor did he deceive us by his promises: the mass of the people preserved an unmoved composure in the presence of danger and replied to his protestations by contempt.

This unshaken attitude was maintained not only in those parts of the country which the enemy did not actually invade, but also there where he took possession, proclaiming his occupation as definite.

The enemy's expectations were equally disappointed in the case of the Polish detachments formed in Austria, to which a certain portion of our ignorant youth was drawn, beguiled by patriotic watch-words. These detachments, destined to decoy the population of the Kingdom into alliance with Austria and Germany, met with ill-will and opposition in all grades of a society possessing clear knowledge of its aims in this portentous hour.

Unavailing were the skilful intrigues of the Austrian Government, which sought for a while by deceptive appearances to prove that this armed movement had the support of all the political elements of Galicia. It stands clear to-day that the detachments of sharp-shooters have against them not merely the judgment of the Kingdom and of Prussian Poland, but also of the majority of our fellow-countrymen in the Austrian provinces.

Even to the least enlightened minds it became evident that the few whose hopes were fixed on Austria, as the only State in which our national rights had met with a measure of recognition, overrated her independence, not having yet discovered that she had stooped to so low a part as to become the mere compliant tool of Prussian policy.

To-day, in face of the manifest will of the Polish Nation, which has with all the strength of its soul come forward against Germany, in face moreover of the fact that Germany alone is the opposing force, independent, conscious of her aims—whereas those who fight with her are simply the instrument of her schemes—in face of all this, any help wilfully given by Poles to Germany or her allies must be looked upon as a transgression against Poland.

The Russian army has, in Austria, already set foot upon earth Polish in pith and marrow, and we are now expecting its advance into those immemorial fastnesses of our nation which Prussia possesses.

In this grave moment there lies before our fellow-countrymen in those parts the solemn duty of affirming that in thought and deed they are one with the rest of Poland. It behoves them to see to it that the enemy shall not impose upon them even the semblance of an act contrary to the purposes of our nation. Such would be accounted any opposition whatsoever of the population against the Russian army, an opposition which Germany will infallibly attempt to rouse in many places.

Countrymen! For a hundred years, boundaries have divided us which the circle of events has left untouched; to-day, the sons of our soil are being forced to spill the blood of brothers, fighting in the ranks of their own enemies. This war, great, epoch-making, abolishes those boundaries and opens out a radiant morrow of re-union to our nation which in spirit never suffered itself to be divided. This our unity we to-day irrefutably confirm; for the national attitude bears testimony to the fact that in all parts of the great land of our fathers we Poles have one idea, one purpose :—the unification of Poland and

the laying of foundations for the free development of the nation.

WARSAW, *November* 25, 1914.

. . . . . .

Of the sequel to this and to the other manifestations of Polish opinion; of the end of the war (which at the moment of writing is not yet in sight); of the ultimate fate of Poland and her twenty-three million inhabitants, her traditions, language and culture—there is yet no foundation for other than conjecture. Nevertheless this history, however brief and inadequate, of a nation of origins so ancient, of a zenith so glorious, and of a century-long obscurity, oppression and affliction so unbearably bitter, cannot be reasonably brought to an end, even an end so far from the happier end in prospect for Poland, without the expression of some word of sympathy, some sentiment of justice, some indication of right and freedom. For none of this trinity of true principles remains inviolable if the new Europe contain not a new Poland, free in polity, faith and speech.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF POLAND

		Accession	Death or Dethronement
Mieszko I.		962	992
Boleslaw I. the Brave		992	1025
Mieszko II.		1025	1034
Casimir I. the Restorer		1040	1058
Boleslaw II. the Bold		1058	1079
Wladislaw I. Herman		1079	1102
Boleslaw III. the Wry-mouthed		1102	1138
Partitional Period of Rival Duchies	Wladislaw	1138	1159
	Boleslaw the Curly	1146	1173
	Mieszko the Old (1)	1173	1177
	Casimir II. the Just	1177	1194
	Mieszko the Old (2)	1194	1202
	Wladislaw Longshanks	1202	1206
	Leszek the White	1206	1227
	Henry the Bearded	1231	1238
	Henry the Pious	1238	1241
	Boleslaw the Modest	1243	1279
	Leszek the Black	1279	1288
	Henry Probus	1289	1290
	Przemyslaw	1295	1296
	Wencelaus or Waclaw	1300	1305
	Wladislaw the Dwarf	1306	1333
	Casimir III. the Great	1333	1370
	Louis of Hungary	1370	1382
Wladislaw II. Jagiello		1386	1434
Wladislaw III. of Varna		1434	1444
Casimir IV.		1447	1492
John Albert		1492	1501
Alexander		1501	1506
Sigismund I.		1506	1548
Sigismund II.		1548	1572
Henry of Valois		1574 (February)	1574 (June)
Stephen Batory		1576	1586
Sigismund III.		1587	1632
Wladislaw IV.		1632	1648
John Casimir		1648	1668
Michael Korybut		1669	1673
John Sobieski		1674	1696
Augustus II.		1697	1733
Stanislaw Leszczynski (1)		1704	1709
Stanislaw Leszczynski (2)		1733	1734
Augustus III.		1734	1763
Stanislaw Poniatowski		1764	1795

APPENDIX

POLAND AND THE POLES—ETHNOGRAPHY, INDUSTRY, RELIGION

THE Polish nation forms the western division of the Slav race, and of all the branches of that great tree it remains perhaps the nearest in tradition, tongue, and temperament to its original. The Polish people are mostly of the middle height, with rounded skull, dark hair, and fresh complexion. In temper they are frank, hospitable, and vivacious, readily responsive to the sensuous influences of colour and sound; and possessed of a lively wit and intelligence. Their belief in ultimate and abstract principles becomes almost a passion. Like most deeply idealistic peoples they are little practical. At their zenith they were a nation of knights and heroes, of painters and poets. They loved honestly and passionately the soil that gave them birth; but they disdained the serf who laboured to give them bread. Beside and almost because of their ardent chivalry, their intense idealism, their elaborate culture, there grew in them a strain of extravagance, a vein of intellectual vanity, an aristocratic contempt for things common and (they said) unclean. Thus it occurred that though they could fight hard battles and lose them; could sing heroic songs and compose them; could attain brilliantly to all the distinctions of art and refinement in thought and culture, the Poles could never—until it was too late—settle down soberly to the business of self-government. When they did attempt this, and even seemed likely to succeed at

it, their ruin had already been planned by avaricious neighbours. Their most earnest attention to the restoration and reconstruction of their disordered dwelling could not then stave off the roof and walls that already fell shattering about their shoulders.

The Polish language, a most flexible, soft, and musical speech, is eminently adapted to the arts and artifices which have created of it—as we have seen elsewhere—a great and living literature. Like the Czech or Bohemian tongue, with which it was very similar until the sixteenth century, the Polish forms part of the western-Slavonic group of languages. It may be most easily distinguished from other Slavonic languages by its strongly-pronounced nasal sounds, its greater flexibility, and greater number of variations. Many influences may be traced in its development—Latin, Italian, French, German, and to a very minute extent even Turkish and Hungarian—but the Slav stock of this language was too deeply-rooted to be much mutilated even under the alien storms that swept from time to time across Central Europe. Thus it happens, happily enough, that Polish works of the thirteenth century are read and understood with little difficulty in the Poland of to-day.

The ethnographical Poland may be said, accurately enough, to form a rude, irregular square, with one corner at Jablunkow (in Silesia), one corner in the Carpathians, and others at Suwalki, Sanok, and Ujscie on the Notec. It is mainly a flat, shallow country, fairly moist, with a moderate climate and variable temperature. The soil is very fertile and is particularly adapted to the production of wheat. For many hundred years Poland was the greatest wheat-growing country in Middle Europe, shipping grain even to England from its port of Dantzig. Other products are salt, oil, wax, coal, lead, and zinc.

The old Polish capital, Cracow, and that of more recent

growth, Warsaw, are both situated on the Vistula, which has its source in the Carpathians and its outlet in the Baltic Sea. On the north-west, between the Vistula and the Oder—which enclose between them the heart and cradle of Poland—are found the following towns: Gniezno (Gnesen), the seat of the Archbishop and Primate of Poland, and Poznan (Posen). On the south and south-west are situated Kijow and Lwow (Lemberg); and on the north-east Wilna, the former capital of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania. Finally, in the triangle between Gniesno, Cracow, and Warsaw is Czestochowa, the second important religious capital of Poland, which holds, on a hill without the town, Poland's most holy shrine.

The ancient Kingdom of Poland, before the first partition in 1772, included territory lying outside this square and inhabited by peoples not strictly Polish in language, race, or religion. The area of this original kingdom was 730,752 square kilometres or 275,263 square miles; its population was roughly 16 millions. It contained the ten governments of the present Kingdom of Poland and the nine governments of Lithuania and Little Russia—viz., Wilna, Grodno, Kovno, Mohilew, Minsk, Vitebsk, Podolia, Volhynia, and Kieff—together with the whole of Galicia, the duchy of Poznan, West Prussia, and some districts of East Prussia.

At the last census, this ancient territory of the Kingdom of Poland held a population of 40,646,000. Ethnographical Poland, however, does not now include the nine governments of Lithuania and Ukraina, although even in these the Poles still form a considerable minority.

The Poles are in an overwhelming majority in the following territories:—

	Area (sq. kil.).	Polish population.
Kingdom of Poland . .	127,684	9,300,000
Galicia	78,497	4,700,000
Austrian Silesia . . .	5,060	240,000

	Area (sq. kil.).	Polish population.
Duchy of Poznan	29,991	1,291,000
West Prussia	29,628	850,000
Opole	13,230	1,338,000
East Prussia	36,989	278,000
Total	319,079	17,997,000

In addition there is an important and homogeneous Polish population in many neighbouring districts, viz. :—

Lithuania and Ukraina	2,300,000
Rest of Austria	450,000
Westphalia	535,000
Total	3,285,000

To these must be added the Polish populations elsewhere, viz. :—

Rest of Russia	520,000
United States	3,500,000
Other parts of the world	500,000
Total	4,520,000

According to the most cautious of estimates, therefore, the number of Poles in the whole world may be computed at about 25 millions. In Europe, where it numbers roughly 21 millions, the Polish population is seventh in order of size —greater than that of Spain, and about three-fourths that of Italy.

. . . . . .

The following are more detailed statistics relating to each of the three divisions of Poland :—

Russian Poland

The territory defined by the Treaty of Vienna as the

Kingdom of Poland, and thereby conceded to Russia, comprised ten governments with a total area of 127,684 square kilometres. In 1911 the total population was 12,467,000. As the census of nationalities, however, was taken in 1897 and is notoriously inaccurate, there is no direct means of ascertaining the precise proportion of Poles contained in this population. Nevertheless, from the statistics of religions it may be taken for granted that all the Catholics, as well as the members of the small sect of Mariavites, are Poles. In the official statistics 99 per cent. of the Catholics in Poland are considered by the Russian authorities as Poles, while in 1897 10 per cent. of the Protestants and about 50,000 Jews also acknowledged themselves as such.

The figures are as follows :—

	Total number.	Number of Polish adherents.
Roman Catholics . .	9,001,349	9,001,349
Mariavites . . .	73,033	73,033
Orthodox	476,865	..
Protestants . . .	634,649	63,000
Jews	1,747,655	50,000
Others	1,787	..

Thus in the Kingdom of Poland there is a Polish population of at least 9,200,000 or 76 per cent. of the total. The Russian population (of which 205,405 are soldiers and 24,714 civil servants) is not considerable, although the official statistics include in these 335,357 Little Russians and about 30,000 White Russians, who form of course a distinct race.

Besides these ten governments of the Kingdom of Poland, the following nine governments of Russia also formed part of the ancient Polish Kingdom—Wilna, Grodno, Kovno, Mohilew, Minsk, Vitebsk, Podolia, Volhynia, and Kieff. This territory is 180,901 square miles in extent, and the Poles are scattered over the whole, in greater numbers, of course, on

the borders of the present Kingdom of Poland. The Polish population in these provinces is roughly about two millions. The proportion of Poles is especially high (about 30 per cent.) in the government of Wilna. In the town of Wilna, out of a total of 205,203 inhabitants there were, according to Russian official statistics, 109,808 Poles, or 53 per cent. of the total. The Poles in these nine governments mainly represent the intellectual and wealthy classes.

The population of the Kingdom of Poland is chiefly engaged in agriculture. The 1909 census divides it as follows :—

Urban	2,618,859
Rural	9,320,459

There are 43 towns in the Kingdom with a population of over 10,000, the largest being Warsaw (922,000) and the next Lodz (508,330). The Polish population is rapidly increasing, as may be seen from the birth-rate (37.5 per thousand), the marriage-rate (7.2), and the death-rate (21.1). The natural increase amounts to the very high figure of 16.5 per thousand.

The emigration figures for Russian Poland are fairly high. In 1908, 35,646 persons emigrated to America; while about 250,000 emigrate for some months every year to Germany and Denmark as agricultural workers.

The following table shows the distribution of property in land in the Kingdom :—

	Per cent.
Russian State lands	5.8
Confiscated and distributed among Russian colonists	3.0
Polish estates (large)	31.8
Polish estates (small holdings)	55.0
Town estates	4.0
Miscellaneous	0.4
	100.0

As we have seen, the main industry is agriculture, and the main agricultural product is wheat. In 1911 the net production of wheat in the Kingdom of Poland was 205,208 thousand pounds—an average of 16.47 per head. In the same year there were 1,221,769 horses in the Kingdom (9.8 per 100 inhabitants), and 2,301,106 head of cattle (29.5 per 100 inhabitants). In connection with agriculture are the flourishing industries of brewing and distilling (two-thirds of the products being exported) and that of beet-sugar.

All industries have shown a marked increase in activity of recent years. The progress in mining is perhaps particularly worthy of mention. In 1910 there were 10,953 mines of varying size employing nearly half a million men and yielding an annual income of about £87,000,000. The Kingdom produces 26 per cent. of the total coal output of the Russian Empire, and no less than 83 per cent. of the total output of zinc. It is also rich in iron, copper, and salt. After agriculture the textile industry, centred in the growing town of Lodz, is undoubtedly the first in importance, and its annual output is valued at £21,000,000.

Austrian Poland

The total area of Galicia is 78,497 square kilometres. The population, according to the census of 1913, is composed as follows:—

Poles	4,700,000
Ruthenians	3,208,090
Germans	90,110
Others	9,770
Total	8,007,970

Although the Poles form no more than 58.55 per cent. of

the total population of Galicia, the western part of Galicia is practically all Polish. Out of the 85 districts (*Bezirke*) into which the whole of Galicia is divided,

25	are	inhabited	by	more	than	95 per cent. of Poles.
7	,,	,,	,,	80	,,	,,
3	,,	,,	,,	65	,,	,,
5	,,	,,	,,	50	,,	,,

The population of these districts, where the Poles are in an overwhelming majority, is 4,301,180.

However, the numbers of Poles inhabiting other districts are still considerable.

The Poles represent more than—

40	per cent.	of the total	population	in	9 districts.
30	,,	,,	,,	18	,,
20	,,	,,	,,	2	,,

while only in seven districts they are less than 20 per cent. Thus the Poles form a big majority in the whole country, while they inhabit uniformly Western Galicia and are a very important minority in Eastern Galicia, where the greatest part of the townspeople are Polish. In Eastern Galicia, also, most of the landed property is in Polish hands.

In Galicia there are 36 towns of more than 10,000 inhabitants, of which the two largest are Lwow (Lemberg), with a population of 208,100, and Cracow, with 180,000. The rate of increase of the population in Galicia is one of the highest in the world; the birth-rate being 39.55 per thousand, and the natural increase 14.59. The Polish population, it may be remarked, is growing faster than any other nationality in the country. The emigration from Galicia to America is very considerable, however, and amounted in the years 1901–1909 to 591,031, of which 337,672 were Poles. The population

(as in Russian Poland) is principally rural, and is divided up as follows :—

Town population	1,595,028
Rural population	6,430,647

The land property is divided as follows :—

Area occupied by estates of—

	Hect.
Over 5,000 hect. (State property included)	728,484
„ 2,000 „	474,408
„ 500 „	790,774
Less than 500 hect.	407,496
Small holdings	4,932,533
Public estates	505,374
Total . . .	7,839,069

By far the greatest part of the wealth of Galicia is derived from agriculture: thus taxation on land brings 10,461,361 crowne (£400,000) annually to the Austrian Exchequer. Galicia possesses 858 distilleries and breweries and 2384 mills, besides exporting large numbers of cattle and horses. The country is very rich in minerals, and particularly in oil.

The coal output amounted in 1911 to 12,301,998,000 kilograms; the zinc output for the same year being 26,068,000 kilograms. The salt mines of Galicia rank with the famous Salzburg industry as the centre of the salt production in Austria; in 1911 the output was 1,627,826,000 kilograms.

Prussian Poland

In the following Prussian territories the Poles form the majority of the population :—

	Area (sq. kil.).
Duchy of Poznan (Posen)	28,996
West Prussia	25,521
East Prussia	12,026
Silesia	13,230
Total area	71,842

The distribution of the nationalities, according to the census of 1910, is as follows:—

District.	Total population.	Poles.	Others.
Poznan (Posen)	1,327,291	900,059	427,232
Bydgoszcz (Bromberg)	758,314	378,631	379,488
Olsztyn	543,469	267,632	274,320
Marienwerder	960,855	394,934	565,921
Opole	2,207,981	1,169,340	1,037,754
Total	5,797,910	3,110,596	2,684,715

In addition there are 209,189 Poles in the district of Gdansk (Dantzig); which number, together with those in various other districts of East and West Prussia and Silesia, brings the total Polish population to a little over four millions. The proportion of Jews in this territory is very small—only 1.5 per cent.

The largest Polish towns in Prussia are Poznan (Posen) with 156,700 inhabitants, Bytom (Beuthen) with 67,700, Gniezno (Gnesen), and Opole (Oppeln). The population, divided as it is equally between town and country, with the exception of Silesia, which is the richest coal district in Germany, is not engaged in any industry of note, although trade is in a very flourishing condition, especially in the banking branch. Some twenty-five years ago more than a hundred small banks were amalgamated into a syndicate, for the protection of Polish interests, which carries on business to the extent of more than 1500 million marks (£75,000,000).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following works are recommended to the student desirous of closer acquaintance with Poland and the Polish Question:—

Polish—

The histories of
Jozef Szujski (Lemberg, 1865-6),
Joachim Lelewel (Brussels, 1837),
Sokolowski, and
Tatomir; and the statistical works of
Czynski.

German—

Sybel: *Die Begründung des Deutschen Reiches.*
Roepell and Caro: *Geschichte Polens.*
Von Moltke: *Polen.*

French—

Sorel: *La Partition de la Pologne* and *La Question d'Orient.*
Niederle: *La Race Slave* (translation from the original Czech).
Dauchot: *Immortelle Pologne!*
Starczewski: *L'Europe et la Pologne.*

English—

Day: *The Russian Government in Poland.*
Bain: *Slavonic Europe; The Last King of Poland,* etc.; *The Catholic Reaction and the Valois and Bathory Election; Poland under the Saxon Kings.*
Tatham: *John Sobieski.*
Wolski: *Poland.*
Askenasy: *Poland and the Polish Revolution.*
Lodge: *Austria, Poland, and Turkey; The Extinction of Poland.*
Morfill: *Poland.*
Eversley: *The Partitions of Poland.*
Petre: *Napoleon's Campaign in Poland.*
Mitchell: *Handbook for Russia, Poland,* etc.
Forbes Nevill: *Polish Literature.*

The works of the historian Fletcher and the excellent section on Poland in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* should also be consulted.

INDEX

A

Act of Horodlo, 63, 74
Act of Reform, 200-208
Additional Act, 250
Agriculture, 38, 56, 84, 91, 184
—— in Austrian Poland, 307
—— in Russian Poland, 305
Alexander I., Czar, policy in relation to Poland, 236-242, 246, 247
——, relations with Lithuanians, 234, 237, 246
Alexander II., Czar, 252, 258
Alexander, Grand Duke of Lithuania, King of Poland, 85, 86-89
Aristocracy. *See* Nobility
Army, 35, 133, 142, 146, 147, 167-202, 203, 205, 246
Augustus, Elector of Saxony, King of Poland, 166-170, 171
Augustus III., son of above, 172, 173, 174, 176, 189, 192
Austria, Great War affecting Polish subjects in, 289
——, loss of Polish provinces in Napoleonic Wars, 233
——, share in First Partition, 196, 197, 200, 204, 210
——, share in Fourth Partition, 240, 241
——, share in Second Partition, 210, 211-212, 217, 225
——, share in Third Partition, 226, 227, 228
——, relations with Poland, 164-165, 167, 257
——, repression of Polish subjects, 266-268
Austrian Poland, statistics of, 305-307
Autocratic government. *See* Monarchy

B

Batory, Stephen, 117, 119-128, 135, 157, 181
Bezprym, 22, 23
Bismarck, attitude towards Prussian Poles, 263 *et seq.*
Boleslaw Chobry, the Brave, 11, 12, 15, 16, 20-21, 26, 34, 38
—— the Bold, 26-28, 36
—— the Curly, 41, 42
—— the Modest, 47
—— the Wry-mouthed, 29-31, 36, 37, 40, 41
Bolingbroke, Henry, 73
Brandenburg, Duke Albert of, 84, 161
Brodzinski, 270, 271, 278
Brühl, Heinrich von, 175, 176, 177, 189
Brzetyslaw, Prince of Bohemia, 23, 24
Buczacz, Treaty of, 140, 142
Burgher class, 47, 54, 55, 68, 85, 91, 93, 94, 100, 186

C

Cagliostro, 188
Calvinists, 105
Casimir the Restorer, 23-25, 35
—— the Just, Duke of Poland, 42, 43
Casimir III., the Great, 51, 52-69
Casimir, Grand Duke of Lithuania, King of Poland, 82 *et seq.*
Casimir IV., 112
Catherine the Great, 159-161
—— part in partition of Poland, 192-199, 200-201, 203-208, 210-216, 218, 220, 222, 225-227, 228

Catholicism in Poland, 53, 70, 74, 76, 77, 164, 194, 195, 203, 244. *See also under* Church
——, the Lutheran opposition, 105
——, statistics, 303
Censorship of Diet, 250
—— of Press, 247
Character, national, 299
Charles X. of Sweden, 136-137
Charles XII. of Sweden, 168-170
Chattel-slaves, 34, 47
Chlopicki, General, 252, 253, 254
Chmielnicki, Bohdan, 135-136, 137
Christianity, introduction of, 12 *et seq.*
Chroniclers, early, 271-273
Church, the Polish, 13, 17, 20, 37, 41, 47, 53, 63-64, 77, 245, 258, 261. *See also* Clergy
——, Hussite faction, 77, 78, 105
——, independence and power of clergy, 41, 47
——, Lutheran Reformation and its effect on, 105-109
——, struggles for independence of State, 27, 36, 43, 45
Cities, chief, 38, 56, 64, 186, 201, 202, 262, 300-301, 306, 308
Clergy, 36, 37, 41, 47, 56, 65, 77, 79, 95, 106 *et seq.*
Colonisation Bill, 263
Colonists, German. *See under* German
Condé, Prince of, 138, 142, 144
Confederation, Right of, 113
—— of Bar, 195
—— of Targowica, 205-206, 208, 211, 212
Conrad of Masovia, 46
Conscription, 259
Constantine, Grand Duke, 245, 246, 247, 251, 252, 253, 255, 281
Constitution, the Polish, 110-118
—— Act of Reform after First Partition, 200-208
——, Czartoryski scheme of reform of, 175-177
—— established by Czar Alexander, 243
Constitution of 1504, 88
Cossacks of Ukraina. *See* Ukrainian Cossacks
Court life, 181
Cracow, city of, 64
——, principality of, struggles for throne of, 41 *et seq.*, 43 *et seq.*
——, University or Academy of, 55, 77
Czartoryski, August, 175, 181-183
——, Michael, 175
——, Prince Adam, 182, 237, 243, 244, 253, 254, 255
Czartoryski family, 172, 174, 175, 181-183
—— reform scheme of, 89 *et seq.*, 192

D

Dantzig, 29, 84, 91, 124, 126, 134, 161, 163, 214, 300
——, siege of, 173-174
Defences, border, 100, 135
Diet, the general. *See under* Constitution
Diet of Grodno, 213-215, 216
Diet of Radom, 88
Diets, local, 79, 83, 84, 112, 116, 203
Dissidents, the, 105, 106, 194

E

Education, 56, 77, 105, 127, 245
—— in early centuries, 14, 21, 37
—— in Prussian Poland, 263-265
—— in Russian Poland, 261
Emigration, 304, 306
d'Enghien, Duc, 138
Ethnography, 299 *et seq.*

F

Fleet, the Baltic, 134
Foreign settlers and traders, 41, 54, 93
Fortresses, border, 100
France, relations with Poland, 166, 172, 173 *et seq.*, 206, 210, 217, 218, 231-233, 240, 241

Frederick the Great, 160, 161, 162-164, 200
——, designs on Poland, 192 *et seq.*
——, part in First Partition, 196, 197-199
Frederick William II., part in Second Partition, 200, 201, 203-204, 205, 209, 210-212, 215, 216
——, part in Third Partition, 222-223, 225, 226-228, 230
Freemasonry of Poland, 247
French influence on literature, 278
—— intrigues at Polish Court, 141

G

Galicia, Poles in, 267
Gallus, Martin, 37, 271, 272
Gedymin, 62
German colonists, 47, 54, 68
Germans, early invasions of Slav territory, 6, 7, 10 *et seq.*
—— in Prussian Poland, 263
Germany, relations with Poland in tenth century, 10, 12, 16, 17
—— in twelfth century, 29, 31. *See also under* Prussia
Glinski, Michael, 97, 101
Great Britain, policy relating to Poland, 206, 217, 237-241, 257, 258, 259-260

H

Handicrafts, 39
Henrician Articles, 120
Henry V., Emperor, wars against Poles, 29-30
Henry of Wroclaw, 48
Henry of Valois, elected King of Poland, 120-122
Henry the Bearded of Silesia, 46
Henry the Pious, 46
Hetman, the Grand, and Vice-, 74, 104
Historians, 273, 276, 286
Hussites, the, 77, 78, 105

I

Industries, 305, 307
Insurrections of 1863, 259, 260
Ivan III., Czar of Muscovy, 86, 87
Ivan IV., the Terrible, 125-126, 157

J

Jadwiga, Queen, 60, 63, 76
Jagiello, Grand Duke of Lithuania, or Wladislaw II., 61, 62, 70-79
——, descendants of, 80-89
Jesuits, 109, 127
Jews, the, 54, 68, 109
John Albert, King, 85, 87, 88, 112
John Casimir, King, 115, 136, 137-138, 141, 142

K

Knights of the Holy Sword, 102 *et seq.*
Knights of the Lizard, 83
Knights of the Teutonic Order, 44 *et seq.*, 50, 51, 52, 56, 61, 62, 73, 75, 76, 78, 79, 83, 84, 98, 161
Kosciuszko, Thaddeus, 208, 220-223, 225, 229, 236
Koszyce, Treaty of, 59, 60, 70
Krasinski, Sigismond, 270, 271, 284-286

L

Lacy, General Peter, 173
Land Banks, 251, 262, 264
Language, 300
Law of Exception, 264-265
Leopold, Emperor, relations with Sobieski, 148, 150, 152
Leszek the Black, 48
Leszek the White, 43, 44, 45, 46
Liberum Veto. See Veto
Literature, Polish, 37, 57, 270-288
Lithuania, state of, 51
——, Alexander I.'s policy relating to, 246

Lithuania, Czar Nicholas II.'s policy relating to, 251
——, Napoleon's treatment of, 234
——, union with Poland, 61-63, 103-104
Livonia, struggle for, 102
Local Diets. *See under* Diets
Lokietek, 48, 49, 51, 58, 59, 65
Lorraine, Duke Charles of, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153
Louis of Hungary, King of Poland, 57, 58
Lubecki, 250, 251, 253
Lukasinski, 247, 250
Lutheran movement, 105, 194, 276

M

Maria Theresa, Empress, policy relating to Poland, 164, 193, 196, 197, 200
Mary d'Arquien, wife of John Sobieski, 141, 147, 154, 166-167
Maximilian, Emperor, 122, 123, 130
Mendovg, 62
Michael Wisniowiecki, King, 139-140, 142, 143
Mickiewicz, 270, 271, 275, 280-282
Middle class, rise of, 261
Mieszko I., 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 38
Mieszko II., 22-23
Mieszko the Old, 42, 43
Military class. *See* Army
Moimir II., 7
Monarchy, 33, 50, 70, 90, 111
——, downfall of power, 40
——, election of foreign kings, 115, 116
——, elective system, 114, 115, 202
Muscovite wars, 86-88, 98, 103, 125, 132, 134, 136, 137, 141
Mustafa, Kara, the Black, 147-149, 153

N

National League, 268
Napoleon's policy relating to Poland, 231-232
Nicholas II., Czar, 251 *et seq.*
——, suppression of Poland by, 255
Nicholas, Grand Duke, proclamation of, 290-291
Nobility, the, 36, 40, 41, 45, 55-56, 59, 63, 65, 71, 78, 79, 84, 85, 88, 90-96, 110-111, 114-116, 117, 178, 201, 205-206, 221
Novelists, 286-288
Novosiltsoff, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 250, 257

O

Obodrites, 4, 7, 11, 16
Officials of State, 111
Orthodox Church, 74, 75, 76, 87, 106, 164, 194, 195

P

Partition, the First, 189-199
——, the Second, 209-218
——, the Third, 219-230
——, the Fourth, 240
Paskievich, Marshal, 255, 256
Patriotic Society, 250, 251
Paul, Czar, 229
Peasants, the, 34, 35, 38, 55, 68, 91, 93, 94, 179, 185, 221, 222, 223, 255, 261, 262, 267, 275
Peter the Great, 158, 159, 167, 168, 169
Philosophers, Polish, 286
Poets, Polish, 274 *et seq.*
Polanes, the, 4, 9, 10
Poles, racial origins, 4
Polish Legion, Napoleon's, 231
Pomerania, 29-31, 45, 49, 50, 51, 52-53, 83
Poniatowski, Joseph, 233, 235, 236
——, Stanislaw, afterwards King Stanislaus Augustus, 160, 190-199, 200-202, 205-208, 213, 214, 216, 222, 228
Population, statistics of, 301
—— in Austrian Poland, 305 *et seq.*
——, in Prussian Poland, 307

Population, in Russian Poland, 304
Potocki family, 176, 189
——, Stanislaw, 247
——, Theodore, 171, 173, 174
Premyslaw, 48, 49
Printing, introduction of, 273
Products, 300
Provinces, disintegration of, 40
Prussia, Napoleon's campaign against, 232-233
——, kingdom, origins and rise of, 84, 161
——, relations with Poland, 44, 45, 257
——, repressive treatment of Polish subjects, 262-266
——, share in First Partition, 196, 197-199, 200-204, 206, 207
——, share in Fourth Partition, 240-242
——, share in Second Partition, 209 *et seq.*, 215, 216
——, share in Third Partition, 222-223, 225, 226-230

R

RADOM, Diet of, 113
Radziwill, Jan, 113
——, Karol, 179, 180 *et seq.*
——, Queen Barbara, 102, 104, 106
Red Russia, 16, 20, 26, 31, 53, 60, 71
Reformation, influence in Poland, 105
Religion. *See* Catholicism
Repnin, Prince, 193, 194
Republic, formation of the, 254
Revolution, the French, 252
——, the Polish, 220 *et seq.*
Russia, Great War affecting Polish subjects, 289, 290 *et seq.*
——, relations with Poland, 16, 20, 87, 157, 170 *et seq.*, 189, 190, 192-199, 200-201, 203-208, 210-216
——, share in First Partition, 196, 197-199
Russia, share in Fourth Partition, 236, 240
——, share in Second Partition, 212
——, share in Third Partition, 226-228
——, suppression of Poland by, 255 *et seq.*
——, suzerainty over new kingdom of Poland, 235, 236, 243-256
Russian Empire, rise of, 157 *et seq.*
Russian Poland, statistics, 302-305
Ruthenia. *See* Red Russia
Ruthenian Orthodox Church, 74, 75, 76

S

SAPIEHA, Casimir, 167
Secret Societies, 247, 251, 252, 253, 259
Sejm, or local Diet. *See* Diets, local
Senate, the, 112
Serfs, 34, 35, 47, 55, 68, 91, 92, 185
Sforza, Queen Bona, 98, 101, 104, 107
Sienkiewicz, Henry, 287-288
Sievers, 213, 214, 216, 217, 218
Sigismund I., 89, 94, 97-102, 106
Sigismund II., 102
Sigismund III., 113, 129, 130-133
Slavs, origins and institutions, 1-7
Slowacki, 270, 271, 282-284
Sobieski, James, 142, 152, 156, 166, 168
——, John, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141-156, 181
Social conditions in Augustan era, 178-188
Socialist party, Polish, 268
Stanislaw, St, murder of, 27-28, 36
—— Leszczynski, King, 117, 169-174
—— Augustus, King, 160, 193-199, 200, 202, 205-208, 213, 214, 216, 222, 228

Starostas, 49, 55; 111, 117
State, early history and development of, 8, 21, 33 *et seq.* *See* Constitution
Statute of Nieszawa, 83, 90
—— of Wislica, 54
Stephen of Hungary, 17, 22
Struggle of the Investiture, 27
Sweden, wars with, 132, 136, 168
Swidrigiello, 75, 76
Swietopelk, ruler of Moravia, 7
Szlachta, the, 21, 36, 59, 65, 95, 100, 106-109, 111, 112, 114, 117, 132, 157, 186, 201

T

Tatars, the, 41, 46, 48, 72, 86, 99, 100, 127, 138, 139, 140, 142
Taxation, 94 *et seq.*, 133
Teutonic Knights, the, 44 *et seq.*, 50, 51, 52, 56, 61, 62, 73, 75, 76, 78, 79, 83, 84, 98, 161
Towns. *See* Cities
Trade and commerce, 21, 38-39, 56, 92, 93, 261-262
Treaty of Thorn, 84
—— of Vienna, 241
—— —— ——, breach of, 257, 260
Turkey, Augustus' War with, 168
——, first conflict with, 99
——, part in War of Partition, 196, 197
——, Sobieski's campaigns against, 143, 145-146, 147-153

U

Ukrainian Cossacks, 100, 127, 134-136, 139-140

V

Veto, the Liberum, 88, 89, 113, 114, 116, 167, 176, 189, 192, 195, 201
——, abolition of, 202
Vienna, siege of, 148 *et seq.*

W

War, the Great, as affecting Poland, 289-297
Warsaw, city of, 187, 188
——, Grand Duchy of, 231-242
——, siege of, 224
——, University of, 245
Wasa Kings, the, 129-140
Wenceslaus, or Waclaw, of Bohemia, 48, 49
Wiece, or Great Council, 110, 112
Witold, 72-75, 78
Wladislaw I., of Cracow, 28
Wladislaw II., of Cracow, 41
Wladislaw III. (or Langshanks), 43, 46
Wladislaw I. (or Lokietek), of Poland, 48, 49-51, 58, 59, 65
Wladislaw II. (or Jagiello), King of Poland, 61, 62, 70-79
Wladislaw III., 80, 81
Wladislaw IV. (Wladislaw Wasa), 84, 115, 132, 133-136

X

Xavier, Elector of Saxony, 192

Z

Zamoyski, Jan, 120, 123, 125, 126 129, 130, 131, 132
Zborowski, family, 129
——, Samuel, 126
Zebrzydowski, Nicholas, 114, 131
Ziemowit of Masovia, 60

00036675

Digitized with financial assistance from



HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC

WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 27 November, 2018